



NCSEHE

National Centre for Student
Equity in Higher Education



Curtin University



PARTNERSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Make tomorrow better.



NCSEHE

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Equity in Higher Education



Curtin University

Partnerships in Higher Education

National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, 2014

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Preface

The business case and the social justice case for partnerships

The work that universities do to widen the participation of people from equity backgrounds involves activities in the pre-tertiary domain with both school-age and adult people – to encourage interest in tertiary study and offer practical assistance with access; and activities with enrolled tertiary students – to encourage a sense of belonging and improve success and retention.

This work requires the combined and coordinated efforts of a number of institutions and organisational units, because:

- The root problems are related to poverty, racism and disadvantage, the effects of which are seen in every aspect of the lives of those affected, and which are complex and not easily overcome. Small scale, narrowly-focused, or short-term efforts are unlikely to break the cycle of disadvantage or the associated pattern of educational engagement.
- In the pre-tertiary domain, those affected by disadvantage, and who may be uninterested in tertiary study, need a scaffolded age-appropriate series of interactions which gradually build awareness, aspiration and confidence. Large numbers of school-age and adult learners have this need – it is the sheer scale of this task, not just its complexity, which suggests that partnership-based operations are needed.
- In the pre-tertiary domain, university is not a strong presence, nor a great influencer, in the lives of the people it wants to reach. These school students and adults have no formal relationship with universities, which are thus poorly placed to drive change or transform opinions. Universities are reliant on the major influencers of family, community, and school, and must partner with them for impact.
- With enrolled tertiary students, the university can directly exercise influence. Ensuring that students from equity backgrounds can achieve comparable rates of success, retention and completion is a major focus. Ideally these students should experience a seamless, targeted set of supports and inclusive experiences inside and outside the curriculum, that build confidence and a sense of belonging. Internal partnerships between academic and non-academic organisational units across the university are required for this to happen.

Recent Developments

Universities have always undertaken partnership activities, but the incentives available under Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) funding since 2010 have seen the emergence of larger-scale, more collaborative partnerships in the area of widening participation. The 31 case studies in this publication illustrate the range and richness of this work.

The types of partnerships presented include:

- Intra-university partnerships – typically required for retention work, but also for some outreach work.
- Inter-institutional (or inter-university) partnerships – those involving more than one university, typically around outreach work.
- Inter-sectoral – involving the Vocational Education and Training (VET) or schooling sector.
- Social or community partnerships – involving government and non-government agencies and community groups/organisations, or targeting community engagement.

Partnerships can have multiple characteristics and cover more than one category.

What makes partnerships work

A partnership can be said to work if it achieves its objectives, be that improving aspiration or improving retention, for example. The government might measure success by the extent to which the partnership contributes to national policy priorities and outcomes.

This publication focuses in part on a related dimension, which is the nature of partnership-working itself. What characteristics, features, principles and practices hold partnerships together and contribute to successful outcomes? What do practitioners and policy-makers need to know about partnership-working so they can design and fund those with the best chance of success?

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) has published a literature review, as well as the examples of current practice presented here, to explore the answers to these important questions.

What characteristics, features, principles and practices hold partnerships together and contribute to successful outcomes?

Literature review: themes from partnership research

The consensus is that evaluation of partnerships involved with equity goals for disadvantaged populations must involve social justice evaluation frameworks. The goals of partnerships (including community coalitions/community engagement) are numerous and include many social justice actions: advocacy, outreach, education, prevention, service delivery, capacity building, empowerment, community action, and systems change.

The most popular type of partnership found is cross-sector social partnerships, or 'projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis'. A cross-sectoral approach means that organisations from business, government, education, and civil society are involved.

An analysis of interview data from ten Australian social partnerships revealed the five dimensions of partnership work comprised:

- cultural scoping
- connection-building
- capacity-building
- collective work
- trust-building.

Five sets of principles were also identified as being effective in guiding both initial and ongoing partnership work. These are building and maintaining:

- shared purposes and goals
- relations with partners
- capacities for partnership work
- partnership governance and leadership
- trust and trustworthiness.

These principles are enacted around the five dimensions of partnership work and manifest in a set of practices aligned to them. This work is best realised through the work processes within social partnerships, supported and informed by external sponsors and the adoption of particular variations and emphases within social partnerships over time.

Despite the different dimensions partnerships display in terms of inclusivity, focus, depth of engagement and scale, research on collaborations in education (and in other contexts) have sought to produce typologies of effective partnership working. Commonly identified features from studies in the UK and Australia include:

- trust between partners
- shared and clearly-defined aims and goals
- effective leadership
- clear organisational structure and role definition
- valuing each member
- efficient communication
- transparent distributions of funds
- high levels of enthusiasm and commitment from each partner.

However, working collaboratively poses challenges and risks for partners. Identified features of effective partnerships are often observations of a static point in time, and underplay the challenges faced in developing and sustaining collaborations. Partnerships are dynamic and continuously evolve as partners leave, new partners join, personnel change, the policy context shifts and priorities change.

Conclusion

It is this rich combination of theory and practice which will help us to understand and enact partnerships better, so that the goal of improving participation is achieved.

Professor Sue Trinidad

Director

National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education

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Equity Director

Queensland University of Technology

2014 NCSEHE Visiting Fellow

Visual Arts Portfolio Workshop

Australian National University

Intra-university
Inter-sectoral

The program addresses the need to inform students and teachers about the portfolio and interview process and to raise awareness about scholarships.

Description

The *Visual Arts Portfolio Workshop* provides senior secondary students with admission information about tertiary visual arts and design arts programs, augmented by practical art making experiences typical of first year undergraduate study. The program was developed by The Australian National University (ANU) in 2014 as a schools based outreach component of the existing *ANU Regional Partnerships Program (RPP)*, which works collaboratively with fifteen regional secondary schools to provide educational enrichment and aspiration building programs.

The Visual Arts Portfolio Workshop prompted students not on tertiary pathways to aspire to university.

Partners

- The Australian National University
 - Access and Inclusion
 - ANU School of Art
- Secondary schools in regional south-east NSW.

Objectives

The *Visual Arts Portfolio Workshop* aims to build aspiration in, and to academically support, Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES) regional secondary school students who have the potential to enrol in tertiary visual or design arts courses. It recognises that these students may not aspire to participate due to a lack of awareness about the courses and how to apply for them. The program informs students and teachers about the portfolio and interview process for application; explains that admission to many of these courses does not require an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR); and raises awareness about scholarships.

Provision of HEPPP-funded, ANU-organised, arts enrichment programs in partnership schools since 2010 has established positive collaborative relationships between school teachers and ANU. This has enabled strong uptake of the program, with 80 per cent of partnership schools participating.

Activities

In June and July 2014, the program ran in 12 partnership schools in regional south-east NSW. Alongside their teachers, groups of 15–25 students from Years 10–12 participated in a three-hour program, involving 220 students in total.

Activities were developed and delivered by a recent ANU graduate who maintains a professional art practice and who has experience teaching undergraduate visual arts courses, reviewing portfolio applications, and conducting entry interviews.

Supported by images of works made by recent graduates of the ANU School of Art, the program articulated areas of specialisation that are available in undergraduate visual arts and design arts courses. Skills taught in different specialist areas were described, such as animation, glassblowing, or textile design. Students browsed sample entry portfolios and visual diaries, supported by facilitated discussion to critique portfolio content. Students then worked in groups to assemble mock-up portfolios targeting entry into specific specialist areas.

The program was punctuated by observational drawing activities. Charcoal and ink drawing techniques were taught, with an emphasis on experimentation. The entry interview process was described and sample questions were clearly communicated. Information about scholarships was discussed, and reinforced via handouts in resource bags provided to participants. Resource bags also contained relevant undergraduate program pamphlets, ANU Open Day information and a DVD containing stories of rural students at university.

Afterwards participants received certificates of participation, and were offered a subsidy to assist with the expense of travelling to Canberra to attend a portfolio review session during ANU Open Day.

Outcomes

Student and teacher feedback indicates the program has a high degree of impact. Students appreciated the informative and hands-on nature of the program. Teachers' comments were consistently appreciative: *"Money is tight everywhere for these extension and specialist programs. We are grateful for the investment in our students."*

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being 'not interested at all' and 10 being 'very interested,' students indicated their interest in going to university before and after participating in the program. Of particular note, the 11 per cent of students who indicated a very low level of interest in university before participating (circling 1 or 2), were on average, 37 per cent more interested (circling numbers up to 8) in going to university after participating in the program.

This program prompted students not on tertiary pathways to aspire to university. Five students subsequently travelled to the ANU Open Day for a portfolio review.

Partnership 'Working'

The RPP has consistently offered visual arts programs to schools, including an *Artist in Schools* residency program in partnership with the ANU School of Art; annual artist-led gallery education programs in collaboration with Bega Valley Regional Gallery; and campus-based visual arts focus visits. The success of this new initiative depended on the quality, appropriateness and reliability of preceding visual arts activities within the RPP, as well as the established trusting relationships formed between ANU and its partnership schools since 2010.

One factor influencing its success is the shared sense of purpose school teachers and university staff have about the aims and objectives of the programs. Partners understand that HEPPP-funded programs are not institution-specific recruitment initiatives, rather the objectives are student focused, with an emphasis on educational enrichment and aspiration building within a capacity-building methodology.

The HEPPP has also enabled partners to take a long-term view with regard to tangible outcomes, with enrichment activities operating across all secondary years. Importantly, teachers feel supported and valued as contributors to the success of the partnership.

The combination of on-campus and schools-based activities is a strength. Campus-based programs transform the concept of university into a reality for students; and schools based outreach characterises the most accessible form of programs for schools to participate in

because they require minimal administration by teachers. Providing programs at little or no cost to the schools is a universal strength of the partnerships.

Future Activities

Due to the new Higher Education Participation Program (HEPP) funding model, it is not clear how the program will be implemented in 2015. Ideally, future versions of this program would endeavour to sustain engagement of repeat participants by varying the program emphasis between the visual and design arts, and incorporate new practical activities such as printmaking. Additional improvements include involving careers advisers in the program, and articulating graduate student profiles, to enhance understanding of the diverse career opportunities that can result from study in these areas.

The ongoing provision of accessible visual arts enrichment across Years 7–12 will occur via the newly developed *ANU Art and Environment, Exhibition in a Suitcase* outreach resource. The *Suitcase* will be available for loan for periods of up to four weeks from Term 1 2015.

Bridges to Higher Education

University of Technology Sydney
Macquarie University
University of Western Sydney
The University of Sydney
Australian Catholic University

Inter-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

Evidence shows an increase in students' confidence to challenge expectations relating to their education options.

Description

Engaging young people who previously might not have considered higher education as an option, the *Bridges to Higher Education* program works with schools, TAFE and community partners in Greater Western Sydney. *Bridges to Higher Education* was funded \$21.2 m by the Commonwealth Government's HEPPP.

Partners

- Australian Catholic University
- The University of Sydney
- The University of Technology, Sydney
- Macquarie University
- The University of Western Sydney
- NSW Department of Education and Communities
- TAFE NSW
- the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW and ACT) Pty Ltd
- over 250 schools, local government organisations, Indigenous organisations and other community, philanthropic and social enterprise organisations.

Objectives

The *Bridges to Higher Education* partnership (*Bridges*) was formed to:

- improve academic outcomes
- increase awareness, confidence and motivation
- build school and community capacity
- increase capacity to access higher education.

The *Bridges* partner universities recognise that they can achieve more to support the schools and communities of Greater Western Sydney working together. The partnership delivers 88 programs across 250 schools, with innovative and evidence-based program delivery. Partners share and develop knowledge and expertise to continually build and improve upon their delivery, providing a comprehensive and better-coordinated engagement strategy.

Bridges has seen the evolution of the university–school relationship to that of co-production in the interests of meeting school needs.

Activities

The 88 *Bridges* programs span Year 3 to mature age and align to five core outcomes:

- improving students' academic preparedness and outcomes
- increasing students' awareness, confidence and motivation towards higher education
- building school and community capacity
- increasing capacity to access higher education
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Collaborative project groups have driven the development of the 'Make Your Mark' website; three inspirational television series: *Enquiring Minds*, *Models of Achievement* and *Indigenous Models of Achievement*; the development of extensive resources for schools and parents, including lesson plans mapped to national curriculum outcomes, cross-matched with the NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards; a video conference series and robotics program providing academic lecturers and professional learning to schools in both metro and rural areas; and a theatre performance program touring metropolitan and rural schools. In addition, the universities have collaborated to map school engagement in widening participation programs, and to develop and implement an evaluation framework incorporating collective indicators to enable common evaluation across the partnership.

By the end of 2013, *Bridges* programs had engaged with over 269 schools, 143,567 student contacts, 8,595 teacher contacts and 12,225 parent contacts, in addition to the tens of thousands of students, parents and teachers who have viewed the television series.

Outcomes

Bridges programs have had a highly positive effect on students' readiness to face the academic challenges they are likely to encounter throughout high school and university, with 90 per cent of students stating they feel better prepared for university as a result of *Bridges*, and 91 per cent of parents and carers reporting they have a better capacity to support their child with their higher education goals.

There is emerging evidence to suggest that *Bridges* is changing student attitudes towards learning, with 85 per cent of students reporting they have developed better study skills and 96 per cent of participating teachers reporting that participation had helped them expand their teaching practices.

Parent and carer knowledge of higher education options and benefits has increased, with 82 per cent reporting improved knowledge of higher education options. Evidence also shows an increase in students' confidence to challenge cultural or gender-specific expectations relating to their education options.

Partnership 'Working'

Independent consultants contracted to evaluate the *Bridges* program have highlighted the following benefits derived through collaborative working:

Public funds are used in the most effective way while also providing a basis for continued learning and improvement through collective planning, established communities of practice, shared resources and a fundamental shared vision and commitment.

There is better coordination of university engagement with schools and students; *Bridges* has also offered economies of scale in developing tools to engage a range of audiences.

The *Bridges* program provides a vehicle for improving cross-sectoral relationships, creating strong relationships and a parity of esteem between TAFEs and universities while breaking down historical rivalries.

Collaboration also offers a capacity to increase *Bridges* reach, supporting shared understanding of communities that are relatively over or under-served by *Bridges* projects, thereby enabling better use of resources.

Future Activities

Bridges is applying multiple strategies to enable sustainability. Workforce capability development, embedding *Bridges* activities into school or university practice, creating links to schools and/or university curriculum, developing accessible materials and resources that can be applied in the longer term, and emphasising efforts which promote students' capacity for independent learning are being trialled across projects.

Each of the university partners have realised the benefits of collaboration and have developed relationships with schools and communities which they are keen to maintain. As HEPPP funding for *Bridges* comes to a conclusion mid-2015, new forms of collaboration are being explored.

CQUniversity Widening Participation

CQUniversity

Intra-university

Inter-sectoral

Social/community

In 2014, programs were delivered to a total of 155 schools.

Description

From 2011–2014, the *Central Queensland University Widening Participation* team worked with over 20,000 students to promote, raise and support aspirations of school students towards university. Eight *Widening Participation* programs were delivered to students in Years 5–12 across 155 schools. Student-centred activities included on-campus experiences, aspiration building exercises, demystification and awareness-raising about university, and career development. Programs include Indigenous and primary school specific activities and a mentoring program with Year 11–12 students and current Central Queensland University undergraduate students.

Many students mentioned in their feedback that university was a 'scary place' before the program.

Partners

- 155 schools in the Central Queensland Region
- Central Queensland University (CQUniversity)
- East Coast TAFE
- Central Queensland Institute of TAFE (CQIT, now merged with CQUniversity)
- Central Queensland Indigenous Development Ltd. (CQID)
- Australian Defence Force (ADF)
- other organisations have also contributed as minor partners.

Objectives

To increase the participation of under-represented groups in higher education in regional Queensland, the *CQUniversity Widening Participation* team developed the *Engage Education* series of programs for school students.

Programs tailored to different age levels encourage dream building and goal setting, while raising aspirations, promoting resilience, and deconstructing perceived barriers to higher education. To achieve this, partnerships with over 155 schools in Central Queensland have been established. Eight programs were developed to reach out to the student bodies that were least represented in higher education participation, covering a region north to Calen, south to Gayndah and west to Winton.

Activities

CQUniversity aims to embed programs into the school curriculum via practitioner-delivered programs and teacher professional development. In 2014, programs were delivered to 155 schools. In addition to the keystone programs involving students from Years 8–12, outreach activities include programs solely focused on Indigenous students, and students in their final years of schooling.

One of the lowest participant groups in higher education are those from regional and remote communities. With 52 per cent of the Queensland population residing outside of the major metropolitan area, a Mobile Education Trailer (MET) brings a university experience to students who may not otherwise have the opportunity because of their location. The MET is a classroom on wheels that travels to schools, showcasing university life to students through a virtual tour and highlighting a range of career opportunities through stories from high-profile role models.

Parents, caregivers, teachers and school leaders are included in supporting students during the programs. By involving key people in a student's life, a sustained change in attitudes is cultivated around higher education, making the decision to study more accepted.

Outcomes

The *Engage Education* programs are now presented across all year levels (past Year 5) so more students are successively participating in programs and becoming familiarised with university. In early 2014, the survey question 'I believe it is possible for me to go to university' showed an increase in agreement of 19 per cent after completion of the program.

Many students mentioned that university was a 'scary place' before the program in their feedback. Post-program, students said their fears were allayed once they were able to walk around and see the university for what it was, and the welcoming nature of the university community.

Feedback indicates that students display a marked increase in interest in pursuing higher education. Teachers have commented on increased engagement in the classroom immediately following the *Engage Education* programs. One teacher provided this feedback after the MET program: *"Many have not really seen university study in their daily and family lives, so the idea that uni is for anyone, anywhere, anytime is really positive for these students."*

Another teacher confirmed the positive impact of involving parents in the program: *"Exposing them to the idea that their child could go to university even if no one they know does."*

Students have also commented on changes in perspective about going on to higher education: *"The experience changed my view about the career I want to pursue."*

"I realised what steps I could take to start my dream career." - student.

Partnership 'Working'

In 2010, a Queensland consortium was formed when eight Queensland universities planned a coordinated approach in response to the Bradley Review. The *CQUniversity Widening Participation Strategy* is guided by the 'Widening Participation in Queensland: a coordinated approach' Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the outcomes of the 2009 CQUniversity Social Inclusion Symposium and the *CQUniversity Student Equity and Social Inclusion Plan*.

Quality programs cannot be delivered successfully without the support of academic and professional university staff. Academics provided an insight into program offerings, university procedures and graduate outcomes. Professional staff provided information about access and support for students through their university journey.

Similarly, during specific *Engage Education* programs, VET staff provided an experience for students who were interested in a more vocational education pathway. In addition to VET partnerships in the Rockhampton region, the ADF provided support and information to students about military pathways after school completion.

These partnerships work because:

- Programs in conjunction with CQID target the specific needs of Indigenous students to encourage and support participation in higher education.
- A high level of trust and understanding has been developed between schools and the *Widening Participation* practitioners around the importance of the programs and their integration into the busy school curriculum.
- Practitioners support teachers in schools by providing tailored careers programs and resources to complement career education curriculum.

Future Activities

In 2014 over 7,000 Central Queensland students will be exposed to the *Engage Education* programs. Every year level from 6–12 in cluster schools from across the region will have the opportunity to participate in the final round of current *Engage Education* programs in 2014.

A successive strategy will leverage off the current *Widening Participation* strategy and will be developed for long-term sustainability and community engagement. CQUniversity is committed to providing all students with equitable access to higher education regardless of their location or socioeconomic status.

Whole-of-Community Engagement Initiative

Charles Darwin University

Intra-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

Partners are committed to valuing and using local Indigenous knowledges to inform all aspects of the program development and implementation.

Description

In partnership with local stakeholders, Charles Darwin University has embarked on a *HEPPP Whole-of-Community Engagement (WCE)* initiative which will work with six remote Indigenous communities across the Northern Territory to build aspiration, expectation and capacity to participate in higher education. This large-scale multi-site participatory action research project involves community engagement leaders, mentor and enrichment officers, and a community teacher's liaison leader working closely with community based Indigenous mentors, leaders and organisations to drive innovative bottom-up strategies and solutions built on, and responsive to, Indigenous knowledges.

Activities are being identified, implemented and led by local Indigenous community members with support from HEPPP–WCE staff.

Partners

- Charles Darwin University (CDU)
 - Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor – Indigenous Leadership
 - Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor – Academic
- Northern Territory Department of Education
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
- North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd
- Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education.

Objectives

Working in collaboration with the project partners and using their extensive Indigenous networks, the *HEPPP–WCE* team is working with six remote Indigenous communities to:

- identify and explore current Indigenous community perspectives (both Western and Indigenous) about higher education
- identify the facilitators of, and barriers to, contemporary pathways into higher education for remote and very remote Indigenous communities
- embed and link Indigenous community perspectives and concerns within the development and implementation of existing strategies to building aspiration, expectation and capacity to participate in higher education
- identify and co-create ongoing opportunities for community, research, academic and public policy leaders to build relationships and evidence translation activities associated with promoting pathways into higher education
- identify means for making higher education relevant and more culturally and physically accessible to Indigenous students and adult learners.

Activities

Activities are currently being developed using a participatory action research approach: all activities are being identified, implemented and led by local Indigenous community members with support from *HEPPP–WCE* staff. Early signs indicate that this will include involvement from schools, health centres, shires, land management organisations and other local Indigenous organisations. Key participants include:

- Traditional Owners, Elders and Leaders from each participating community
- staff and students in remote schools and colleges
- students in Indigenous ranger groups and/or participating in *Learning On Country* programs
- adult learners and community members from the participating remote communities
- service providers and organisations from a range of sectors working in or through remote Indigenous communities
- representatives from the key research partners
- staff and students already engaged in VET and higher education within the Northern Territory
- policy-makers with an interest in Indigenous pathways into higher education.

The nature and scope of activities will be determined by each participating community, within the scope of the funding available. It is envisaged that activities may include:

- practical support that will assist school students to aspire for high academic achievement and to further their education
- site-visits to, or ‘taster’ programs within, CDU
- participation in on-country training and learning activities
- mapping job and related education pathways relevant to remote contexts
- helping people to complete vocational qualifications in their community
- documenting community views about participation in higher education.

Outcomes

The *HEPPP–WCE* initiative is in the early stages of establishment. Achievements to date have included the establishment of a steering group, including representatives from each of the participating communities, and the appointment of all *HEPPP–WCE* staff, including a program manager, three community engagement leaders, three mentor and enrichment officers and the community teacher’s liaison leader. All positions are research-active roles and will be integral to the implementation of participatory action research methodology.

Ethics approval has been granted to establish the initiative as a large multi-site Indigenous participatory action research project, and site selection and subsequent community-level consultation is well underway, with a view of establishing a joint partnership agreement with each participating community.

Partnership ‘Working’

It is well-established that genuine and trusting partnerships are key to all successful higher education programs. Some general principles have been adopted to guide *HEPPP–WCE* partnership development:

- Partners must be committed to achieving the aim of building aspiration, expectation and capacity for remote Indigenous communities to participate in higher education.
- Partners must be committed to valuing and using local Indigenous knowledges to inform all aspects of program development and implementation.

- Wherever possible, key partnership activities should be community-led and driven and build on existing community strengths.
- Trust, respect and reciprocity are central values to our partnership work.

These have been incorporated into an overarching communication and engagement strategy with input from program partners and other key stakeholders.

The various partnerships that have, and continue to be, established and maintained through *HEPPP–WCE* are complex. The broad geographical spread of participating communities across the Northern Territory, different first languages, diverse cultural practices and understandings, and contextual challenges unique to each remote Indigenous community, are just some examples of the factors that necessitate careful navigation through *HEPPP–WCE* partnership development processes. A slow and steady approach has been, and continues to be, required.

A commitment has been made to conduct a Social Network Analysis (SNA) at the commencement and completion of the initiative in each of the participating communities. This will explore the pattern and strength of relations between individuals, groups, institutions and other social collectives involved in *HEPPP–WCE*. To our knowledge, this type of evaluative approach to working in partnership has not yet been trialled in remote Indigenous contexts at this scale.

Future Activities

The participatory action research process involves stakeholders in the conduct of research and the implementation of action within a ‘plan, act, observe, reflect’ cycle. Therefore, central to the *HEPPP–WCE* initiative is an iterative process that involves ongoing reflection, subsequent planning and resulting action. The participation of local community members and their contributions/feedback are paramount to the success of *HEPPP–WCE*. This ongoing reflective process is directly linked to action and change: ultimately the WCE process will drive future activities.

iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program

Charles Sturt University
TAFE Western NSW

Inter-sectoral Social/community

The program was developed specifically for Indigenous people in rural and remote areas of western New South Wales.

Description

The *iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program* is a multisector partnership providing a supported pathway for Aboriginal students to a career in oral health or related areas in the health industry. The program is a pathway commencing with Certificate II; building through Certificates III and IV at TAFE Western to guaranteed entry into the Charles Sturt University Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy and then to the Bachelor of Dentistry.

Partners

- Charles Sturt University (CSU)
- TAFE Western
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Western NSW Local Health District
- Bila Muuji Aboriginal Health Services Inc.

Objectives

Rural and remote Indigenous people suffer from higher rates of oral disease as a result of limited access to dental and oral health practitioners.

The *iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program* was developed specifically for Indigenous people in rural and remote areas of western NSW to help address the severe shortage of oral health and dental practitioners in the area. The program enables Indigenous students to study within their local area and provides a pathway with strong employment opportunities in oral health. It is envisioned that by tailoring the training to rural and remote students, they will be more likely to remain in the area upon completion of their studies and therefore increase the number of dental assistants, oral health therapists and dental practitioners in these disadvantaged areas.

In the future we hope to be able to attribute improved oral health in our remote and regional locations to this program.

Activities

The *iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program* was introduced in 2013 for Aboriginal students from the Central West, North Western and Far West regions of NSW. The program commences with a 12 week full-time flexible delivery Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training. This introductory course provides students the opportunity to develop a range of skills in the classroom in addition to gaining work experience in the health/dental industry.

Upon completion of the Certificate II, students enrol in the Certificate III in Dental Assisting at TAFE Western's 'Winhanganha' Aboriginal Learning Centre in Orange and access CSU's

state-of-the-art dental clinic to develop practical skills in addition to their theoretical knowledge. Students can leave at the end of the Certificate III qualified as a dental assistant, or continue on through the Certificate IV and pathway to university.

Encouraging students to transition from TAFE to university in order to further their career can be challenging. All *iSmile* students undertake regular clinical work in the university dental clinics and therefore become familiar and comfortable with the surrounds. It is envisaged that this familiarity will allow students to see they have a pathway to the Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy or Bachelor of Dentistry. At all stages, *iSmile* students use shared facilities with TAFE Western and CSU oral health and dental students at all levels of study.

Outcomes

The initial cohort consisted of 11 students from locations such as Broken Hill, Lightning Ridge, Dubbo, Newcastle, Condobolin and Parkes. Of the initial intake, nine students are nearing completion of their Certificate III and seven have indicated they are going to continue into the Certificate IV. The next cohort has commenced the program and with numbers growing with each intake it is proving to be popular.

As the program is still in the early stages it is difficult to provide evidence of success, however anecdotal outcomes have been very encouraging. The students are highly enthusiastic and engaged in their learning, they are building professional networks that they will be able to draw on throughout their careers, and they are looking to the future. A number of the students have indicated they intend on continuing into the Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy or Bachelor of Dentistry upon completion of the program.

As the program is broken into a series of qualifications, the students are able to use their skills in the workplace as they progress through the program. This is of benefit to the community as it is providing skilled oral health professionals in locations that have traditionally experienced shortages.

Partnership 'Working'

For partnerships to work and thrive there needs to be a strong common purpose. CSU and TAFE Western are dedicated to improving the educational outcomes and lives for Indigenous, regional, rural and remote Australians. TAFE Western is the single largest provider of vocational education and training for Aboriginal people in Australia. The idea of working together with the state and federal governments and industry in providing pathways for Indigenous people came naturally.

Building on long-established relationships, in 2008 CSU partnered with TAFE NSW, the NSW Police Force and the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations to develop the *Indigenous Police Recruitment Our Way Delivery (IPROWD)* training program. *IPROWD*, managed by TAFE Western, is a specialist training program to assist Aboriginal people to gain entry into the NSW Police Academy at Goulburn, the first step to becoming an officer in the NSW Police Force. *IPROWD* is offered at a range of locations including Broken Hill, Casino, Campbelltown, Dubbo, Maitland, Mount Druitt, Nowra, Redfern and Tamworth.

The success of *IPROWD* led CSU and TAFE Western to investigate opportunities to expand the partnership in line with the NSW Department of Education and Communities Aboriginal Education and Training Policy. Oral health was identified because both institutions had expertise and there was a proven shortage in the footprint of CSU and TAFE Western. Consultation with industry and government was undertaken and *iSmile* was introduced. Charles Sturt University and TAFE Western are currently exploring other targeted professions to develop pathways specifically for Indigenous students.

Future Activities

As the first intake of *iSmile* nears completion of the program, we will undertake a review and evaluation of the program. This will include mapping the students' knowledge and skills to ensure the program is delivering students with the necessary skills to succeed either in practice or in further study. A mentoring program is currently being developed for students who have shown an interest in continuing their studies, and a research project to evaluate the effectiveness of the program through tracking employment outcomes for graduates is in the early stages of planning.

Row AHEAD: Clontarf at Curtin

Curtin University

Intra-university

Inter-sectoral

Social/community

The Clontarf students were recognised as partners of the program as much as participants.

Description

Row AHEAD engages students from Clontarf Aboriginal College in a program of self-development through the sport of rowing. Students take part in weekly training sessions, with the aim of participating in four state regattas held by Rowing WA. As a part of the initiative, students are required to attend weekly academic development sessions.

It was important to the students to create a unique identity, which made rowing their own and to which all partners could be invited.

Partners

- Curtin University
 - Addressing Higher Educational Access Disadvantage (AHEAD) program
 - Curtin University Boat Club (CUBC)
 - Curtin Stadium
- Clontarf Aboriginal College
- Rowing WA.

Objectives

The *Row AHEAD* program meets the AHEAD program HEPPP-inspired objectives of raising aspiration, awareness, capability and eligibility for higher education. Program objectives also align with and supplement the Clontarf Aboriginal College strategic action plan, to support Aboriginal education.

The program was designed to engage with Clontarf students, for whom the following objectives represented new opportunities and learning experiences, in the development of personal goals, vocational opportunities, health and/or wellbeing:

- to provide opportunities to meaningfully engage with university students
- to provide new sporting opportunities
- to provide academic support opportunities
- to provide opportunities to culturally engage in rowing, promoting ownership of the sport through pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, culture and spirituality.

Activities

Row AHEAD offers the following opportunities for personal growth to each participant:

- develop self-awareness by completing career assessment and mapping activities to plan potential career pathways

- nurture an understanding of goal setting in relation to the health and training outcomes and skill development necessary to compete in a rowing regatta
- foster investigative, communicative and collaborative skills by working in groups to complete a workbook project on rowing and its wider health, social and/or academic benefits
- enhance information technology skills by using iPads and a range of applications to design and create an iMovie, documenting their learning, personal development and/or training journey
- cultivate an understanding of university entry pathways and the differences between secondary school and university.

Activities are built around an action learning model, to ground learning in an experiential framework that fosters interest, engagement and collaborative learning dynamics.

The team is made up of teachers, rowing coaches and university ambassador coaches. The organisational structure creates the potential for a positive student–teacher dynamic and enables role model relationships to develop organically. These relationships have great potential to extend beyond the duration of the program, through the planned long-term relationship between the program and Clontarf College, as well as the potential for students to continue their rowing journey through CUBC as on-going members of the club.

Outcomes

Qualitative feedback from students and staff (at both Curtin and Clontarf) has been overwhelmingly positive. This relates to both the impact on student participants in terms of demonstrations of commitment and interest to a school based program, and their interest and awareness of higher education. Program outcomes include:

- learning to row in single sculls, doubles, and quads
- rowing as individuals and teams
- completion of personalised land training, improving fitness and flexibility
- completion of academic sessions on rowing history and theory, developing literacy and study skills
- improvements in attitude toward school and learning.

On 26 July 2014, 16 Clontarf Aboriginal College students fulfilled the significant milestone of forming the first Indigenous rowing squad to take part in a state regatta, representing their school in the All School Championship.

The program is Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) accredited with full unit equivalence, which enables students to be appropriately recognised for the resilience they demonstrate in completing the program.

Partnership ‘Working’

Indigenous people make up around 0.01 per cent of the rowing community. As rowing is often associated with elite schools and tertiary institutions, the parallels between the participation rate of Indigenous people in rowing and in higher education appear closely correlated. The program challenge and motivation for progress was thus clearly defined. The partnership shared a set of values, which together with clearly defined service capabilities, projected forward a communal vision of the program.

Program activities were defined within a service agreement detailing terms of engagement and responsibilities. The agreement is driven by a program proposal which outlines the core philosophy, aims and objectives. However, it proved equally important to acknowledge and respect all partners’ unique reasons for being involved. Thus the partnerships were built around an acknowledgment and celebration of the unique nature of partner objectives and

ownership of distinct service elements of the program. This allowed for an efficient and practical division of labour, with partners focusing on their areas of expertise to the benefit of the participants.

Solidarity and collegiality formed key tenets of the approach to participant engagement. The Clontarf students have carved out a piece of CUBC as their own, and wear the same jumpers as those representing the university club. More importantly, the students have been empowered to create their own rowing identity. One activity early in the program was for students to design their own racing zootie – a uniform to wear when they raced. It was important to the students to create a unique identity, which made rowing their own and to which all partners could be invited, to support and collaborate in. The Clontarf students were recognised as partners of the program as much as participants.

Future Activities

The program has generated much positive community interest and there is a strong will for it to become a regular fixture of both Clontarf College and CUBC. WACE accreditation has solidified the practical impact that the course can have on students who participate.

The rowing community has been very generous in donating two boats to the program for the exclusive use of Clontarf rowers, ensuring facilities are available to continue the initiative. Rowing WA has also offered to provide rowing instructor training for a member of the Clontarf College staff to support the longevity of the program. The program is also looking for other funding sources to ensure this outreach program can continue.

Deakin Engagement and Access Program

Deakin University

**Inter-sectoral
Social/community**

DEAP continues to have a growing effect on student aspirations for higher education.

Description

The *Deakin Engagement and Access Program (DEAP)* is an outreach program for Year 7 to 12 students at schools in Melbourne, Geelong and Victoria's Barwon South Western Region. Using a strengths-based approach to building community capacity, *DEAP* works with partner schools to deliver on-campus and in-school activities. Activities encourage aspiration for post-school education and cover academic enrichment, study skills, and Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) workshops.

"I have no doubt that more of our students will be aware of the benefits of attending university and take up the various pathways as a result." – school principal

Partners

- 30 schools across the Geelong and Barwon South Western Regions; and Eastern, Southern and Western Metropolitan Regions of Victoria
- Barwon Adolescent Task Force
- The Smith Family – Learning for Life Scholarship
- Deakin University
 - ASPIRE program (School of Education)
 - PASS program
 - Deakin School News Network (School of Communication and Creative Arts)
 - Division of Student Administration
 - Institute of Koorie Education
 - Deakin International – Northern Bay College.

Objectives

The communities that *DEAP* works with include populations experiencing multiple barriers to access to, and participation in, tertiary education. *DEAP* aims to build on the aspirations of young people to participate in higher education by improving their capacity to achieve academically, developing an understanding of pathways and preparing students for the transition to university. *DEAP* works with underrepresented schools, parents, carers, families and community organisations to encourage and support young people.

Activities

In 2014, *DEAP* reached around 10,000 students, as well as parents and community members. Activities are designed around a strengths-based approach, which has demonstrable benefits for communities experiencing multiple disadvantage. Flexible enough for adaptation to meet different schools' needs, *DEAP* activities are tailored to each year level.

Activities include:

- Parental engagement workshop, for parents of primary and early secondary students. Raises awareness of the benefits of higher education.
- 'Building blocks to Uni' workshop, Year 7. Introduces tertiary education, exploring the connection between school now and students' futures and pathways. University student ambassadors interact with students and answer questions.
- Academic enrichment workshop, Year 8. Provides a taste of tertiary study options, delivered by university students or academic staff.
- Deakin School News Network, Year 9. Deakin staff, local reporters and teachers help students develop video, audio or written news reports, which are then shared with other schools via the Deakin portal. Allows exposure to university staff, students and facilities.
- Deakin Experience Day, Year 10. Students visit Deakin to learn about studying at university and life on campus – exploring the campus, interacting with university students and experiencing discipline-based workshops.
- Study skills, Year 11. University students deliver workshops focused on study success, including time management, study skills, examination tips and stress management.
- Deakin in your careers office, Years 10 to 12. Deakin staff run drop-in sessions in schools, providing information to students about course planning, preferences, pathways, campus life and support, prerequisites and related subjects.
- SEAS workshop, Year 12. Students learn about the Scheme, which allows for extra consideration during the selection process for students who have experienced educational disadvantage.

Outcomes

DEAP is having a growing effect on student aspirations for higher education. This is evident in the increase in students from partner schools enrolling in university from 2010 to 2013 (15 per cent), and enrolling at Deakin (42 per cent).

Qualitative feedback shows that *DEAP* activities have a positive impact on students' engagement with school and interest in post-school study.

"Our students gained confidence after participating in the ... workshop. They felt that their strengths and abilities were acknowledged." – school teacher.

"I learnt that there could be different ways to get into university." – student.

Partnership 'Working'

The partnership works because it was born out of school needs – greater engagement with the university, with requests for academic engagement and a clear articulation of pathways to university for students.

DEAP staff work closely with partner schools to develop and deliver activities for each year level which are flexible and tailored to the school's priorities. This ensures buy-in from schools, and better engagement with the activities.

Developing an MOU with each partner school has proved useful. This outlines the operational model of the program and the areas of cooperation for both parties, as well as providing guidance for emerging issues.

DEAP is governed by a reference group comprising Deakin staff, school principals and careers advisors, representatives from The Smith Family, a Deakin student ambassador and Deakin researchers. The reference group provides strategic and expert advice on the implementation, continuous improvement and evaluation of *DEAP*.

As a result of the program's positive outcomes, school partnerships have developed with greater trust and acknowledgement of the value of *DEAP*. Communicating the outcomes to schools and community partners, both informally and through an annual report, is crucial to the success of the partnership.

"We appreciated your presence at our school over the last few weeks with Subject Expo and Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) Information evening. It is wonderful to feel part of such a positive and constructive school/university partnership." – principal.

Future Activities

In 2015, *DEAP* will broaden its collaboration with community partners to maximise the reach and impact of activities. Further community-based activities are being developed in collaboration with headspace (National Youth Mental Health Foundation), as well as with the Geelong Cats Community Program and the Victorian BioScience Education Centre. There will also be more focus on other disadvantaged groups. There are plans to work with the National Disability Coordination Officer for the area, to develop disability-related workshops.

Activities will be expanded to target students in Years 3 to 6, as aspirations are influenced early in life by social context and parental attitudes. This will also widen the scope for parental engagement. In 2015, another of Deakin's HEPPP funded projects will develop a whole of program evaluation, to assess progress against objectives and enable further program developments.

Old Ways, New Ways

Macquarie University
Edith Cowan University

Intra-university
Inter-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

The program stems from the desire to improve the participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in science subjects.

Description

Old Ways, New Ways is a new outreach initiative at Edith Cowan University (ECU), which brings together Western and Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives on science. It has been developed to encourage and support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander school students from WA's LSES communities. The *Old Ways, New Ways* program's financial support is predominantly through the Commonwealth Government's HEPPP fund.

Old Ways, New Ways aims to increase students' confidence in their ability to study science at tertiary level.

Partners

- Edith Cowan University
 - School of Natural Sciences
 - Kurongkurl Katitjin: ECU's Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research
 - Engagement Unit
- National Indigenous Science Education Programme (NISEP)
- Macquarie University
- WA primary schools and high schools.

Objectives

Old Ways, New Ways stems from the desire to improve the participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in science subjects, and thereby increase their employment in science and technology. It is focused on finding ways to inspire Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people to reach their full potential by improving their educational and employment outcomes.

Through peer-supported learning and demonstrator training, the program enhances confidence, leadership and communication skills; while providing and promoting positive role models who inspire the students to improved education pathways and science career opportunities.

The initiative provides training and teaching resources, promotes cultural competence through Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander engagement, and facilitates the integration of locally-relevant and specific Indigenous knowledge into the teaching of science.

Activities

Creative, hands-on science activities are at the core of the program. Students are taken on a journey of scientific exploration, where traditional methods of Aboriginal toolmaking and ancient techniques for bushland survival are celebrated and shared. This is complemented by practical experiments in forensic chemistry, such as fingerprinting and chemical analysis of samples, all within a context of modern scientific methodology and enquiry. The workshops are adapted to the differing requirements of students' age, cognition and literacy levels.

Upper level high school students are trained to be demonstrators and provide technical and theoretical expertise in running workshops for younger students.

The practical nature of the workshops strongly engages the students, giving them a fresh vision into educational possibilities for their future. There is an emphasis on capacity-building and raising aspirations for higher education attainment and participation. This hands-on approach seeks to motivate students to study science at high school and beyond, and to improve understanding of traditional knowledge and its complementarity to modern science. *Old Ways, New Ways* allows young people to see value in the rich heritage of Australia's first peoples and the significance of their knowledge to contemporary Australia. Celebrating and showcasing traditional aspects of science by Nyoongar Elders reinforces cross-cultural collaboration and increases respect for traditional knowledge and perspectives.

The program team comprises both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, and models strong cross-cultural partnerships.

Outcomes

By the end of 2014, approximately 600 primary school and high school students from LSES backgrounds across WA will have taken part in the *Old Ways, New Ways* initiative. The team have travelled to the South West Region, a number of metropolitan locations, the Pilbara, and the Kimberley Region.

The initiative has forged stronger links with ECU's LSES metropolitan and regional school partners, and has established a strong dialogue around embedding cultural knowledge further into the school curriculum.

The continued engagement of students from primary through to high school aims to demystify tertiary education pathways and early anecdotal evidence suggests this goal is being achieved. Further longitudinal studies will be undertaken to monitor the efficacy of these initiatives.

Partnership 'Working'

The program sees strong partnership between ECU's School of Natural Sciences and its centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and research: Kurongkurl Katitjin. Kurongkurl Katitjin, is a Nyoongar phrase meaning 'coming together to learn'. The centre's purpose is to 'provide excellence in teaching, learning and research in a culturally inclusive environment that values the diversity of Indigenous Australian history and cultural heritage' – a guiding principle for *Old Ways, New Ways*. These intra-university links have been strongly supported and deepened by ECU's partnership with NISEP, which offers both financial and program support.

Staff from Macquarie University set up the *Indigenous Science Experience Program* just under a decade ago and it became the National Science experience in 2012. They have a long history of working in partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Elders on traditional medicinal plant knowledge for cultural preservation and new drug discovery. Working with the Yaegl community in the Clarence River valley in northern NSW, a

community project was established to preserve bush medicine knowledge and to use contemporary scientific methods to analyse the efficacy of this ancient knowledge. These relationships have informed NISEP's engagement strategies, looking to pass this information on to younger generations and in turn, to increase participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in science.

The NISEP partnership culminated in the *Indigenous Science Experience* at Redfern, NSW in August 2014. This event brought together all of NISEP's partners across Australia to showcase the science engagement work they had been undertaking throughout the year. This event connects the local community and highlights educational and cultural opportunities, creating cultural ties with the wider community. The inter-generational approach creates unity, using science as a common language.

Future Activities

Additional regional and remote schools will benefit from these outreach activities for the remainder of the year. The *Old Ways, New Ways* program will culminate in a science demonstration at ECU at the end of 2014. Participating students from metropolitan areas and the South West Region of WA will be brought onto campus for a day of exciting science demonstrations from Mr Tim Harrison, Director of Outreach and Science Communicator in Residence, Bristol University, UK.

The ECU team plan to develop written resources to preserve and share the scientific knowledge of the Nyoongar people. This would further assist in embedding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander studies into the Australian National Curriculum. ECU will continue to build on the partnerships that have been established with WA schools and will further explore science-based outreach activities with these education providers. On-going funding for the project is currently being explored.

FedReady

Federation University Australia

Intra-university

Over 97 per cent of respondents indicated that they found *FedReady* to be beneficial and would recommend the program to their friends.

Description

Federation University Australia's (FedUni's) *FedReady* program is an intensive course designed to prepare and support LSES students to get a head start in their university career. *FedReady* is coordinated centrally, involving strong partnership between a number of areas within the university to deliver sessions to develop skills such as time management, essay writing, referencing, and academic reading. *FedReady* partners with FedUni's existing student cohort, using their experience and enthusiasm to normalise challenges faced by students when transitioning to university.

FedReady partners with the existing student cohort, using their experience and enthusiasm to normalise challenges faced by students when transitioning to university.

Partners

The *FedReady* program is coordinated by FedUni's Centre for Learning, Innovation and Professional Practice, and partners with the following areas within the university:

- Student Connect
- International Student Support
- First Year coordinators
- academic staff members
- learning skills advisors
- Student Union
- Library
- FedUni Living
- student leaders.

Drawing on expertise from intra-university partners provides students access to a variety of knowledge which would not otherwise be available, and integrates their experience into the FedUni context.

Objectives

FedReady is a HEPPP-funded program first conceptualised in 2012, with the underlying aim of enhancing skills in LSES students who are transitioning into study, to help reduce attrition. The program enables students to develop independent learning skills, and provides them with access to the student experience through the use of current students within the program. Through partnerships with other faculties within the university, the program affords students access to a broad range of information and services prior to entering tertiary study, ensuring that students are as prepared as they can be and are aware of the range of assistance available to them. This, in turn, seeks to broadly increase the participation in not only further student support programs, but also within their studies.

Activities

In 2014, *FedReady* extended to cover multiple campuses within Federation University Australia, from Ballarat to Gippsland, with over 300 students enrolled in the program. Sessions were delivered by partners in a lecture/tutorial format and included an interactive seminar on plagiarism, a workshop on academic reading, skills around time management, an oral presentation skills seminar and a seminar on critical thinking. Critical thinking serves as an underlying theme of the program, and is built into many sessions; as an essay topic, a practice reading (to develop reading skills) and a topic to facilitate discussion. In this way, students are encouraged to think for themselves in a rigorous, analytical and academic manner.

All content is reinforced through the participation of student leaders, who not only participate in the majority of sessions but frequently help to facilitate workshops, providing a student-to-student interaction. This not only provides students with a relaxed, collegial environment, but provides a peer that students can ask about their own experience, and receive information from individuals that have shared experience.

Outcomes

Student surveys conducted revealed overwhelmingly positive feedback, with over 97 per cent of respondents indicating that they found *FedReady* to be beneficial and would recommend the program to their friends. After *FedReady*, the proportion of students describing themselves as confident improved from 21 per cent to 84 per cent in the area of referencing, from 35 per cent to 98 per cent for note taking, and from 26 per cent to 95 per cent for critical thinking.

The intra-university partnerships have assisted in strengthening relationships across the institution, and increasing staff awareness of support available for students. This has improved staff capacity to refer students to vital support services in a timely manner, thereby improving the student experience.

Qualitative feedback from students was overwhelmingly positive:

“FedReady was fantastic, it helped me build my confidence, make new friends which came in really handy for first week back as I already knew people, and definitely got rid of a lot of the ‘first year nerves’. The presentations were really helpful, and it took away a lot of stress regarding referencing and plagiarism.” – student.

“FedReady was an excellent platform to get a new student such as myself on the right foot to achieving success within my degree. Along with the practical skills I learnt, I also made great friends who were like-minded and also wanted to aim high. I would recommend uni ready to any other commencing student.” – student.

Partnership ‘Working’

Developing relationships with key partners was essential in forming the most effective framework possible for the *FedReady* program. As the focus of *FedReady* is preparing students with a wide range of study skills in a variety of areas, collaboration with partners is integral to the optimal functioning of the program. Partners are engaged with the program year-round and meet frequently to discuss ideas, raise challenges or questions and pose possible improvements to the program and individual sessions within it. Each year the program is reviewed and designed as a collaborative process, with no one faculty responsible for developing all sessions or even the overall series of programs. Instead, it is a team effort that seeks to provide students with the best combination of services and information possible within the university.

The partnership works because:

- clear parameters were set to ensure that all partners provide information within a consistent framework of support
- there is a shared goal of supporting LSES students in their transition to university
- there is a shared understanding that providing students with skills before commencing study means less pressure on academic and support staff
- there is consistent discussion and liaising between all partners
- there is freedom for partners to develop their own approach within the *FedReady* framework.

Future Activities

There is an online version of the *FedReady* program in development, which will be available by 2015 and aims to replicate the knowledge and information provided through the *FedReady* program in an online context. The modules used in this program will then be usable as individual modules that academic staff can place in course context to help support their students. The interactive student component will be replicated by using forums and reflections which will integrate students into the existing support systems.

Hike to Higher Education

Anglicare Victoria

Inter-university Social/community

The program's success lies with harnessing the different contributions made by all partners.

Description

The *Hike to Higher Education* program has been designed in response to Anglicare Victoria's four pillars of engagement, comprising of sport, art, music and environment; with the program linked to the environment.

The program relies on current university students from Federation University Australia and Australian Catholic University (ACU) Ballarat campuses. Acting as ambassadors, the university students share their experiences and knowledge with secondary students from the Grampians region.

Partners

- Anglicare Victoria
- Federation University Australia's Regional Schools Outreach Program
- Australian Catholic University
- Ararat Lions Club
- Teaching staff and students from secondary schools in the Grampians region.

Objectives

The overall aim of *Hike to Higher Education* is to encourage students to discover their passion and build their academic and career journey from that passion. This is achieved by providing secondary students with the opportunity to work closely with current university students in an environmental setting that is supportive and scenic.

The aim is strongly aligned with that of FedUni's Regional Schools Outreach Program (RSOP) which strives to increase the access to higher education of secondary school students (participating in the RSOP) from LSES, regional and remote backgrounds.

"It was quite frankly a life-changing and eye-opening trip for me and I feel like I am a better and stronger person and leader from my experiences." – university student.

Activities

In 2013, Anglicare Victoria, FedUni's RSOP and ACU partnered to deliver the 'Port Fairy to Warrnambool' and Grampians Treks, with participation from secondary school students from Ararat Community College and Marian College (Ararat).

Due to the success of these two treks, in 2014, a further two *Hike to Higher Education* treks were run in Mt Maria (Tasmania) and the Grampians National Park. The spread of participating schools has increased to include both Horsham College and Stawell Secondary College.

Prior to each trek, a group of university students is trained to be positive mentors for the secondary students participating in the trek experience, ensuring university students make

and take the opportunities to have positive and organic conversations with the secondary students. A number of team-building initiatives are also implemented to allow both groups of students to work effectively together.

The *Hike to Higher Education* program aims to build experiences and have positive interactions with students primarily from the Grampians region. FedUni's RSOP works with 49 government secondary schools across western Victoria, including the Grampians region. Both programs target students with low aspirations to complete secondary school or access further study in their future, by engaging them in workshops, mentoring with university students and providing them with positive, long-lasting life experiences.

Outcomes

Both qualitative and quantitative data is generated from the completion of each trek experience. Surveys, interviews and verbal feedback are recorded and documented to further improve the program in the future.

In a short amount of time since the intensive *Hike to Higher Education* program has been provided, of the 88 students from the Grampians region that have participated it is predicted that 78 per cent will successfully complete their secondary education and access higher education.

Student absenteeism has decreased for students participating in the program, with attendance increasing from 84 per cent to 93 per cent within a 12 month period. The outcomes achieved by the *Hike to Higher Education* program contribute to the success of the RSOP, which has been evaluated as making a significant contribution in educational achievements and aspirations for students from LSES backgrounds from regional and remote areas of western Victoria.

Partnership 'Working'

The *Hike to Higher Education* program operates effectively due to all key partners working collaboratively to achieve the same shared goal of building student aspiration to university upon successful completion of Year 12.

Anglicare Victoria leads the collaboration and effectively communicates with all key partners including universities, organisations, schools and local community groups to ensure all partners are actively working towards their roles to contribute towards the success of the treks.

The program's success lies with harnessing the different contributions made by all partners including:

- Anglicare Victoria providing funding and staff to develop, coordinate and implement programs in the Grampians area, heavily subsidising the costs for secondary students to attend.
- FedUni's RSOP and ACU supplying trained university ambassadors and volunteer staff to act as positive role models and to share their experiences of how they overcame some of the perceived and actual barriers that initially held them back from accessing university during their secondary education.
- Teaching staff of the participating secondary schools, with a primary role of selecting and encouraging students who had the capability to complete both secondary and tertiary studies but lacked the self-belief in their ability to do so or felt it was unattainable due to financial hardship.
- Local community groups such as the Ararat Lions Club have consistently volunteered their time to assist and support all participants of the trek to maximise their experience.

Future Activities

Anglicare Victoria, FedUni's RSOP and ACU aim to provide more experiences for secondary students through providing the *Hike to Higher Education* program to more secondary school students within the Grampians region in 2015. The goal is to further increase the presence of higher education within the community and to continue to raise students' aspiration to successfully complete Year 12.

While positive outcomes and achievements for students from the Grampians region have increased in recent years, there is still a need to continue delivering these programs and experiences.

"The opportunity to work and talk to uni students was very helpful to help me decide what I would like to study at uni." – secondary student.

Flinders uniTEST

Flinders University
ACER

Inter-sectoral

Flinders *uniTEST* aims to provide greater access to university for students who would not otherwise be selected on the basis of Year 12 performance alone.

Description

uniTEST is an aptitude test designed to assess students' abilities and aptitude over the three core areas of quantitative, critical and verbal/plausible reasoning that underpin studies at university and are needed to be successful. Flinders University partners with secondary schools in the delivery of *uniTEST*, enabling greater opportunity to participate in higher education. Flinders *uniTEST* focuses primarily on the education and access needs of students from LSES and regional/rural backgrounds.

School leaders suggest the Flinders uniTEST is 'valuable and innovative in assisting students gain entry to university'.

Partners

- Flinders University
- public, Catholic and independent secondary schools (130 in 2011)
- Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

Objectives

Flinders *uniTEST* aims to provide greater access to university for those students who would not otherwise be selected for university on the basis of Year 12 performance alone, and to increase opportunities for students from LSES backgrounds to participate in higher education.

In South Australia, 60 per cent of the population reside in areas classified in the lowest quartile of disadvantage, in comparison to the national average of 29.5 per cent. Additionally, 74 per cent of the population reside in Adelaide: the state lacks major regional centres and, by extension, lacks regional programs supporting students in realising their educational aspirations.

The *uniTEST* partnership with schools from across the state provides greater access to higher education for students who may not aspire to participate. The partnership demonstrates the university's commitment to increasing opportunities for students from LSES and regional/rural backgrounds.

Activities

uniTEST involves prospective university students sitting a 95 question aptitude test that determines understanding across three core focus areas including quantitative, verbal and plausible, and critical reasoning. *uniTEST* is delivered under examination conditions through the partner schools.

Flinders *uniTEST* recognises a student's performance in both their Year 12 studies (60 per cent) and their performance in *uniTEST* (40 per cent). A combination of their scores, with a weighting to particular areas of *uniTEST* relevant to the course they are applying for, provides a new entrance rank into Flinders University.

uniTEST is provided at no cost and is undertaken with a 'no disadvantage' clause, so students who do not perform well can be considered for entry to university on the basis of their Year 12 performance, or other relevant pathways, alone.

In 2011, Flinders University piloted the program, extending an invitation to students and schools from South Australia, bordering locations of New South Wales and Victoria, and throughout the Northern Territory. The pilot saw 130 schools partner with Flinders in the provision of *uniTEST* to their Year 12 student cohorts.

More than 50 per cent of schools participating in *uniTEST* are deemed LSES by HEPPP criteria, supporting the concept that *uniTEST* is a key initiative to improve access to university from groups that have traditionally low participation rates in higher education. For the pilot period, 891 students participated in *uniTEST* to increase their potential of participating in higher education.

Initially *uniTEST* was delivered via a paper-based exam, however it is now delivered online, providing greater access to students from regional and rural locations and further streamlines the testing process.

Outcomes

Qualitative feedback from students and staff involved in Flinders *uniTEST* suggests the value of the initiative in providing greater opportunities to participate in higher education. Feedback from school leaders suggests the Flinders *uniTEST* is 'valuable and innovative in assisting students gain entry to university.'

Since the pilot in 2011, Flinders *uniTEST* has partnered with approximately 130 schools annually, administering the test to 3,987 Year 12 students across Australia. Flinders *uniTEST* has provided an opportunity to participate in higher education for more than 350 students based either on their combined ATAR/*uniTEST* result or on their performance in *uniTEST* alone. Students admitted to Flinders University through the 2011 pilot have an average performance of 4.89 Grade Point Average (GPA) across their studies and a 91 per cent retention rate.

Partnership 'Working'

In the development of partnerships with schools for the delivery of Flinders *uniTEST*, educators and school leaders were consulted to determine the aspirations of the school community relating to higher education, and the aspirations of their students.

The partnerships for *uniTEST* required minimal input from educators other than administering the test at the school under examination conditions. A conscious decision was made to minimise the requirements of schools, acknowledging the pressures for educators and students prior to Year 12 examinations.

No financial burden was placed on schools other than through the provision of invigilators for the test, often not required as many schools administered the test during class time. This minimal financial commitment further increased the demand from schools to partner with Flinders in the program.

A majority of schools embraced the opportunity to partner with Flinders University in the delivery of a program that could potentially increase their students' access to university. Schools in LSES metropolitan areas and in regional and rural locations particularly

embraced the partnership opportunity. However, some schools suggested that their students would not need *uniTEST* or that the responsibility for such an initiative should lie solely with the university.

The key components attributing to the success of the partnerships were the retained focus on improving access and opportunity for student cohorts to participate in higher education, reduced administrative and financial burdens, and clear expectations relating to *uniTEST* delivery.

Future Activities

ACER progressively reviews *uniTEST*, including changes to test questions and regular enhancements to online delivery. Online testing continues to prove popular with partner schools due to the ease in administering the test.

Flinders University continuously reviews the course offerings eligible for admission via *uniTEST* to further enable greater access and opportunity for all students. Progressive review is also undertaken to ensure the weightings of *uniTEST* areas are relevant to course offerings and are providing sound baselines for student selection. The expanded and alternate use of *uniTEST* through Flinders University provides a baseline to consider further research into the efficacy of aptitude testing for university admission.

“uniTEST and Year 12 scores play a complementary role in the selection process and the two in combination provide a more powerful means of predicting first-year performance than either measure on its own.” – research undertaken by ACER (2010).

Adult Learner Network

Queensland University of Technology
Griffith University

Inter-university
Inter-sectoral

Student activities include demystification and awareness raising; information on access, scholarships and other financial support.

Description

Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology, two TAFEs and three senior secondary colleges in south-east Queensland partner on an adult learner engagement and support strategy focused on low-income adults bridging to tertiary study via generic tertiary preparation or Year 12-equivalent programs. Partnership activities include multifaceted learner support, staff professional development, research, shared professional practice, and public policy activism. The strategy extends from Caboolture to Brisbane, Logan and the Gold Coast.

Partners

- Griffith University
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
- TAFE Queensland Brisbane
- TAFE Queensland Gold Coast
- Coorparoo Centre for Continuing Secondary Education
- Kingston Centre for Continuing Secondary Education
- Eagleby Learning College.

High levels of trust have been developed between the partners, with a shared commitment to social justice.

Objectives

This partnership aimed to learn more about the motivations, learning experiences and outcomes of low-income adult learners bridging back to education, and to investigate ways to enhance their access to tertiary preparation and bridging programs, support program completion and facilitate transition to tertiary studies. An evidence-based approach was devised to inform both program delivery, and institutional and state policy development regarding these pathways. Strengthening cross-sectoral and cross-institutional collaboration and partnerships and sharing good practice are broad goals.

Initially funded by the Federal Government's Diversity and Structural Adjustment (DASA) program 2009–2012, this partnership has been sustained with HEPPP funding and universities' contributions.

Activities

Activities are guided by the Adult Learner Network Working Group with representatives from each partner institution. QUT and Griffith manage the operational delivery of activities, tailoring these to the contexts and individual needs of the non-university partners. Student

activities include demystification and awareness raising; information on access, scholarships and other financial support; career development; on-campus experiences and university transition days. The capacity to offer financial assistance to students and subsidised learning support has varied with changed funding arrangements.

An integrated approach to public promotion of the programs has been an ongoing feature. Non-university partner staff have undertaken sponsored professional development workshops and receive regular program, institutional and policy updates. A website (www.bridgetostudy.com.au) provides online resources for students, staff and the general community.

Two research elements – focused on learners and the cross-sectoral partnership process – involved the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education at Curtin University, Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC), and the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE). Annual public symposia have reported on project progress, and generated discussion about emerging practice and policy issues relating to educational provision for adult learners. Research findings have been disseminated at conferences and to the Network members, and presented to Queensland policy and funding reviews relating to post-secondary education and training.

The DASA-funded stage of the partnership involved approximately 6,000 adult learners enrolled over five semesters, 2009–2011. The transition to its HEPPP-funded phase (2012–2014) has sustained outreach and engagement activities and delivered on HEPPP requirements for improved cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships.

Outcomes

Quantitative and qualitative information has been amassed over 2009–2013 from student and staff surveys, DETE enrolment and completion data, QTAC application data, and focus groups of university students admitted via these pathways. This confirmed these preparatory programs are high-quality and fit-for-purpose, suitable to low-income people, and reasonably effective pathways to tertiary study. The students are largely low-income or otherwise disadvantaged, have positive attitudes to learning and are very motivated to undertake tertiary study. Those who enrolled at university said they were well-prepared academically. Program outcomes were similar to those of other tertiary preparation programs, with completion and transition rates of approximately 50 per cent and 41 per cent respectively. Partnership activities coincided with a rise in program enrolments.

Partnership ‘Working’

When this partnership commenced in 2009, neither Griffith nor QUT provided tertiary preparation programs, and local providers of adult tertiary preparation and Year 12-equivalent programs faced challenges. Consequently, there was a shared desire to collaborate to achieve enhanced outcomes from these pathways, especially for low-income and otherwise disadvantaged students. Federal government funding enabled the partnership and program implementation.

A management committee, comprising partner representatives was convened and developed a Program Summary formalising shared assumptions, principles and approaches. With the transition from DASA to HEPPP funding, program attributes were reconstituted as the Adult Learner Network and Network Protocol.

The Network meets regularly to monitor program implementation, address any emergent issues, coordinate activities and public policy responses, and as a community of practice. Partners are committed to working collaboratively to achieve Network aims and to widening the participation of disadvantaged people in tertiary education; however, each retains its autonomy and particular mission.

Although funding was owned by the universities, it was allocated by a transparent and agreed process that allowed learner support activities to occur in each provider institution, and for jointly-agreed activities such as evaluation and symposia. This partnership works because:

- Before delivering any activities, partners invested significant time and conceptualisation committing to a unified view and approach which was encoded in the original Project Summary, and more recently in the Network Protocol.
- The DASA grant and institutional contributions enabled large-scale implementation, accommodating the needs of the partner institutions, amassing an evidence base relating to adult learners in these pathways, and positioning the program for continued funding via HEPPP and for a public policy role.
- Program implementation accommodated individual partner institution autonomy and priorities, within an overall consensus of approach.
- High levels of trust have been developed between the partners, with a shared commitment to social justice and the importance of the work.

Future Activities

This partnership has already successfully renegotiated end-of-grant (DASA) funding to sustain its work, demonstrating the value partners place on the work and their dedication to maintaining this. QUT and Griffith have committed institutional HEPPP funds to retain their dedicated adult learner staff, maintain key program elements, and expand their adult learner engagement strategies from their knowledge and contacts developed via the program. The Network monitors changing VET policy as it impacts on these programs and learners, informs senior managers and CEOs of institutional policy and student support implications, and maintains an advocacy role with DETE. The vision for a logical and comprehensive suite of bridging/preparatory programs across Queensland, with support for prospective and enrolled learners, is not yet fully-realised.

Tropical North Learning Academy

James Cook University

Inter-sectoral

The program supports the development of personal qualities such as public speaking, working as part of a team, leadership and organisational skills.

Description

The *Tropical North Learning Academy (TNLA)* mission is to 'engage young minds to meet the challenges of the future, by offering unique, world-class education programs from the early years to university and beyond'.

TNLA provides a seamless educational pathway from the early phase of learning to university and adult life. *TNLA* partners provide a range of 'learning enhancements', called academies, for students at all stages of learning to ensure smooth transitions between the key junctures of schooling.

Partners

- James Cook University (JCU)
- Smithfield State High School
- Trinity Beach State School.

Objectives

TNLA aims to improve awareness of pathways from primary school, through secondary school and on to tertiary education. It builds linkages and pathways between the partners to provide opportunities for students and their families to consider and pursue higher education. As a partnership it provides a forum to develop specific activities, agendas, or opportunities that can be negotiated and pursued collaboratively.

It also aims to improve the connection and engagement between the members of the *TNLA*, improving working relationships between the partners in development of knowledge, practice and engagement that advance these objectives in the pursuit of excellence in teaching within the partnership.

TNLA provides a means by which relevant strategic opportunities can be identified, evaluated and pursued by the partners, either jointly or independently, with the ultimate aim of significantly improving the enrolment and retention in each of the partner institutions.

The Tropical North Learning Academy engages young minds to meet the challenges of the future.

Activities

Activities within the program include:

- The 'Young Scholars Program' which gives students access to world-class teaching staff, specialist learning facilities and university-aligned academic extension.
- JCU works with the Year 7 Trinity Beach student cohort via Smithfield, to support transition to high school and the Junior Learning Academy (JLA). Smithfield Year 8 JLA students are trained by JCU student ambassadors to be peer supporters to Year

7 students. Year 8 Smithfield students, as 'JCU School Ambassadors', take Year 7 students on a JCU campus visit.

- Smithfield students from Years 8 through 12 access a wide range of JCU activities, including:
 - campus tours and subject tasters
 - affordability sessions about scholarship information
 - presentations on Australian Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander engagement
 - academic skills workshops, eg. academic writing, note taking, academic reading and research
 - JCU ambassadors assisting with leadership training.

From a tertiary perspective, the interaction with Trinity Beach and Smithfield has similar impacts on JCU students. The partnership has been a key contributor to the development of the JCU Student Ambassador Program.

The Student Ambassador Program provides students with an opportunity to share their own stories and experiences with school students and become role models and leaders in the JCU and wider community. The program also supports the development of personal qualities such as public speaking, working as part of a team, leadership, time management and organisational skills. The program supports students to develop their own ability to adapt and effectively engage with culturally and socially diverse groups of people, including schools students of all ages, school staff, parents and community members and organisations.

Outcomes

The *TNLA* has become a focal point for the interactions between JCU, Smithfield and Trinity Beach but it also transcends this relationship, and has become a key motivator for students at the three institutions to achieve within their own studies. As an example, Smithfield has a regular column in its newsletter that highlights the interactions between the schools and JCU.

The *TNLA* has fostered over 1,300 interactions between Smithfield, Trinity Beach and JCU staff, students, and parents over the last year. While it is too early to tell in a quantitative sense whether there has been a change in pathway for students, anecdotal evidence suggests a widening appreciation of the range of options available to students within JCU and across the higher education sector.

Partnership 'Working'

The partnership is bounded by an MOU that sets out, in a non-binding fashion, the shared understanding of the purpose of the relationship and the manner in which partners will work together. The relationship works because of a range of factors, including:

- a shared commitment to raising the aspirations of students going on to post-school study
- personal and professional connections between all partners through the close Cairns community
- an appreciation and understanding of the internal and external forces operating on each of the partners and a willingness to give 'room to breathe'.

While the HEPPP funding has supported the development of the *TNLA*, all partners would agree that funding is not a sufficient requirement: it is the long-term nature of the relationship and the shared commitment that leads to good outcomes for students and families.

Future Activities

A number of activities are being planned for the partnership, but central to them all is a focus on the development of personal connection and institutional understanding so that each partner can deliver on their mission, both shared and individual, in the best possible way.

A key direction for the future of the relationship will be research into the pathways of students. Central to this research will be indicators on when higher education aspirations are best fostered. Current resources are targeted at the upper end of secondary school, but JCU is keen to determine whether earlier intervention leads to improved impact.

The place of Trinity Beach in the relationship will be the beginning of this research, but the longitudinal relationship between the partners will give the richest data.

Bendigo Tertiary Education Partnership

Bendigo Senior Secondary College
Bendigo TAFE
La Trobe University

Inter-sectoral

The ultimate aim is to grow participation in higher education in regional Victoria.

Description

The *Bendigo Tertiary Education Partnership* pilot program, supported by the Victorian Government's Regional Partnership Facilitation Fund, is a two year program running in 2014–2015. The program will be delivered across nine regional local government areas that make up a significant component of the catchment area for the Bendigo campus of La Trobe University. The three major elements of the program are:

1. Foundation: to provide program sustainability through robust governance and planning underpinned by data and evidence which provides a picture of regional student aspiration, participation, attrition, attainment, and destination landscapes.
2. Scaffolding: to provide an integrated Pathways Hub to support teaching staff, parents and students to broaden aspirations to include tertiary study. Interventions will include school outreach and engagement, capacity building of school teaching staff, career information for parents and industry engagement and participation.
3. Reinvigoration: to redevelop two higher education course offerings to allow regional participation and collaborative delivery strategies between TAFE and the university.

These integrated elements will provide a broad and sustainable model for raising aspirations and participation in higher education for young people in the region.

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Partners

- La Trobe University
- Bendigo TAFE
- Bendigo Senior Secondary College
- participating schools from the local government areas of Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Central Goldfields Buloke, Mount Alexander, Campaspe, Gannawarra and Swan Hill.

Objectives

The objective is to grow the breadth and depth of higher education programs and higher education pathway offerings in regional Victoria through the development of a sustainable long-term tripartite partnership between La Trobe University, Bendigo TAFE and Bendigo Senior Secondary College.

Activities

- The coordinator of the Pathways Hub at Bendigo Senior Secondary College facilitates outreach and engagement activities on TAFE and university campuses

guided by student ambassadors, provides industry-based expos showcasing pathways through education and employment opportunities in the Bendigo region, and connects 'Return to School' mentors to their home town schools to encourage aspiration for and understanding of tertiary study in Bendigo.

- The Pathways Hub provides a capacity building professional development program for Careers, Managed Independent Pathways and Pathways teachers.
- Transitional activities to support negotiated articulation agreements and seamless pathways from TAFE to university for the agricultural and early childhood industries.
- Reinvigoration of the Bachelor of Science (Agriscience) degree to allow for blended learning and delivery in regional areas.
- Reinvigoration of the Bachelor of Early Learning degree to provide for online learning for regional students currently engaged in the childcare industry.
- Establishing best practice strategies from the pilot to engage regional students, build capacity of regional teachers and reinvigorate other courses to be delivered in regional settings.

Outcomes

Collaboration was improved between the three partners, with an MOU established, agreed terms of reference for governance, a joint communication strategy, progress in developing joint marketing strategies for agriculture and early learning courses, and the development of articulation agreements and joint pathway activities. Pathway options increased for students and prospective students of agriculture and early learning, with improved course delivery to engage more regional students. Industry has been consulted on agricultural science major study areas and to determine practical placement and assessment strategies.

A fully-online Bachelor of Early Learning was introduced for students who have a TAFE diploma and are currently working in the industry, with 77 students currently enrolled. 2014 also saw a blended learning agriscience major subject trialled in Bendigo and Albury Wodonga, and 2015 will see the introduction of science degrees with agriscience majors at both campuses.

The number of students in the target area receiving specialist careers information and education was enhanced through regional secondary schools engagement with the Pathways Hub, and teacher participation in Pathways Hub professional development activities.

Partnership 'Working'

The partnership has established a governance group with a willingness to commit to a shared vision for regional Victorian students which includes shared resources, risks and successes. The Governance Committee meets quarterly to provide leadership, data analysis, community consultation and collaborative planning for long-term higher education needs in the region. It also oversees evaluation of the program.

A project manager for the *Partners in Participation* pilot program has been responsible for establishing the framework under which the partnership operates, and through networking and facilitation has identified, maximised and realised opportunities between partners in working towards their shared vision and goal.

Senior leaders from each of the partners form the Bendigo Tertiary Education Partnership Governance Group, and collectively are responsible for the pilot program. La Trobe University has jurisdiction over the 'Foundation' and 'Reinvigoration' elements and the 'Return to School' mentors outreach component of the scaffolding element. Bendigo Senior Secondary College has jurisdiction over the Pathways Hub and activities for regional high school students and teachers.

An Operations Committee made up of members from each of the institutions meets monthly to plan, implement and evaluate activity in the 'Scaffolding' element and to provide information and advice to the Governance Committee.

Future Activities

The coordinator of the Pathways Hub will continue to facilitate outreach and engagement activities on TAFE and university campuses guided by student ambassadors, provide industry-based expos showcasing pathways through education and employment opportunities in the Bendigo region, and connect 'Return to School' mentors to their home town schools to encourage aspiration for and understanding of tertiary study in Bendigo. The Pathways Hub will also continue to provide capacity building professional development activities for Careers, Managed Independent Pathways and Pathways teachers.

Joint marketing plans for pathways through learning will be implemented by La Trobe University and Bendigo TAFE. An evaluation report defining sustainable best practice processes and procedures will be developed in 2015, which can be used to inform, improve and continue the *Bendigo Tertiary Education Partnership*.

Learn, Experience, Access Professions

Inter-university Inter-sectoral

LEAP stimulates students' interests in particular fields, enabling them to experience and engage with a range of career possibilities.

Description

Victoria's *Learn, Experience, Access Professions (LEAP)* program targets secondary school students from LSES communities to improve participation in higher education. *LEAP* partner universities provide shared delivery of numerous activities, themed under six professions which are traditionally under-represented with students from LSES communities. A website complements and extends these activities, providing students with the opportunity to further inform their aspirations and connect with higher education. Activities include in-school workshops, on-campus experience days, profession-located events and multi-day programs for senior students.

Partners

- Australian Catholic University
- Deakin University
- Federation University Australia
- La Trobe University
- Monash University (host)
- RMIT University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- University of Melbourne
- Victoria University
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)
- Independent Schools Victoria
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
- schools
- professional groups.

Teachers believe LEAP is having a positive impact on students' knowledge of professions and aspirations towards university.

Objectives

Students from LSES communities often experience limited interaction with role models working in different career fields that require university qualifications. As a result, these students are less cognisant of the benefits and opportunities a university education can bring.

LEAP engages students with universities and professional communities to demystify the links between school, higher education and professional careers. This is achieved by stimulating students' interests in particular fields, enabling experiential learning and engagement with a range of career possibilities. Activities offered challenge and extend students, increasing their confidence and enthusiasm for personal possibilities. *LEAP*

enhances students' understanding of entry to specific fields, supporting informed decision-making for successful entry.

Activities

Suites of activities developed under the six identified professions of business, design, engineering, health, law and sciences adhere to a learner progression framework comprising two key foci. 'Understanding the Professions' (Years 7–10) demystifies the professions and associated careers for students, illuminating the journey from school to a diversity of profession outcomes. 'Making it Happen' (Years 10–12) builds learner confidence, knowledge and provides the tools to help senior students reach their goals for profession entry through higher education. All activities link to the AusVELS (Victorian Essential Learning Standards, reflecting the design of the new Australian Curriculum) and Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework, providing learning context. Activities are also complemented by resources and learning content on the *LEAP* website.

Since first delivery in 2013, more than 300 events have been run, with over 14,500 student attendances from 227 schools. Participation has been maximised by repetition of activities in different regions across Victoria. Activities provided are hands-on, showcasing the diversity of careers under each profession through practical application. Event locations include university campuses, hospitals, law courts, specialist centres, art galleries and city centres as well as in schools, providing students with an enriched experience. Multi-day workshops targeting senior students provide in-depth learning experiences whereby students develop confidence in the key skills required for success while immersing them in a university environment.

LEAP also makes use of current university students studying related fields. They provide positive role models and help inspire students that they too can achieve. Video diaries and blogs by current university students shared via the *LEAP* website provide further engagement opportunities for school students as they follow these learner journeys over time.

Outcomes

Feedback from both students and teachers has provided an indication of program achievements. The program is effective in providing students with information about the nature of work in the targeted professional areas. It is also successful in providing information about alternative pathways to the targeted professions, and this is considered valuable by students in the upper years of secondary schooling. A quarter of students indicate they are 'now more interested in going to university', while nine per cent indicate they 'had not considered university before but now are'. Teachers believe *LEAP* to be having a positive impact on students' knowledge of professions and aspirations towards university. Over 89 per cent of teachers agreed that the activities helped students understand the value of studying at university.

Partnership 'Working'

The *LEAP* program was the first substantial program of jointly-coordinated outreach activities to be conducted under the Victorian Multilateral Partnership Agreement (VMPA) signed in 2010 by the Victorian universities, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria. The VMPA supports the increased participation in higher education of students from LSES backgrounds. A group meets regularly to oversee *LEAP*: a central team comprising a program director and web technical officer coordinate the partnership arrangements, while six profession coordinators, based at different partner universities, manage activity delivery. Agreements were established to manage the finances and ensure geographical location was

not an impediment to participation. Regular profession coordinator meetings facilitate good communication and sharing of best practice.

The *LEAP* website and associated content management system has established a strong infrastructure platform, engaging with schools, managing activity requests, recording outcomes and communicating news to over 900 subscribers.

The partnership works because:

- clear protocols and guidelines were established in the early phase to ensure stakeholder expectations were managed
- a communication strategy was established, providing clear lines of communication along with checks to ensure its effectiveness
- strengths and expertise of the professions is encouraged and valued amongst the partner universities
- advisory groups associated with each profession provide additional support and engagement across the partnership
- the rollout and delivery of activities has been progressive, allowing steady program growth while ensuring activity content and delivery responds to feedback
- activities avoid a one size fits all approach, being allowed to develop to meet the uniqueness of each profession
- the nine school university liaison officers provided by DEECD facilitate greater connection and engagement with schools, supporting them to participate in activities on offer while fostering an ongoing connection with the program
- a culture of shared learning exists among the profession coordinators.

Future Activities

Collaboration has been seen as an important component of *LEAP* by all partners along with the infrastructure provided by the *LEAP* website. Current discussions are investigating the optimum structure to continue delivery of the activities developed to date along with the website as a communication tool with target schools.

National Indigenous Science Education Program

Macquarie University

Inter-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

The funding has supported students, teachers and Elders to break down barriers between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Description

Learning, Education, Aspiration and Participation (LEAP) – National Indigenous Science Education Program (NISEP) is Macquarie University's outreach program that engages with schools and communities in metropolitan and rural low socio-economic regions. Our aims are to stimulate an interest in science and secondary and tertiary education, especially by Indigenous youth, in a community-inclusive manner. *LEAP–NISEP* provides a peer-supported learning program delivered on school and university campuses and at partner organisations across NSW and nationally.

LEAP–NISEP continues to develop and provide high-quality activities for a range of school, community and tertiary sector partners.

Partners

- Macquarie University
- Charles Sturt University
- Edith Cowan University
- Hotspots and Firesticks Program
- Yaegl Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Ullugundahi Elders Association
- Dharug Elders
- Wirradjuri Elders
- Sydney Olympic Park Authority
- Redfern Community Centre
- Glebe Youth Services
- Australian Museum
- Web Video Productions
- Fizzics
- National Science Week Australia
- Inspiring Australia
- Dusseldorp Forum.

Objectives

Increasing Indigenous participation in higher education is one of the crucial objectives of *LEAP–NISEP*. The Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education, released in 2008, named Indigenous Australians among the three most disadvantaged groups in Australian higher education. *LEAP–NISEP* key goals are: to increase the level of engagement with science

within rural and regional communities with high Indigenous populations, and increase confidence in science, especially by Indigenous youth; communicate the relevance of science and promote continuing involvement in science through secondary and tertiary education; and develop communities of practice for sustainability of science outreach.

LEAP–NISEP provides positive Aboriginal and rural student role models for younger students that broaden their experience of Aboriginal student excellence, and that allow peer-supported learning.

LEAP–NISEP has been receiving HEPPP funding since 2011 to meet these objectives. It is also supported through Inspiring Australia funding.

Activities

NISEP currently addresses these aims through the following major activities:

- Interactive science shows and expos. Indigenous students are placed in leadership roles as they demonstrate hands-on chemistry, biology and microbiology activities to their peers.
- Macquarie University Open Day. Senior students are given the opportunity to attend the university open day and be exposed to further education options available.
- Macquarie University Science Experience. Three days of science activities over a range of disciplines held on campus, promoting science and providing information for further study. Indigenous senior secondary students take leadership roles.
- Maclean (Yaegl) Cultural Immersion Program. In collaboration with Yaegl community Elders and Maclean High School, a series of excursions have been developed integrating local Indigenous knowledge within the school curriculum.

LEAP–NISEP has provided face-to-face activities to over 2,500 people, involving over 100 student volunteers each year and an additional 100 teachers and community members. The activities involve training secondary school students to deliver a range of science-based practical activities alongside Macquarie University students and academics to all of the schools' Year 7 and special education students. *LEAP–NISEP* runs science expo activities over several days annually at nine high school campuses, building on a long-term engagement with those schools.

Outcomes

Anonymous surveys of secondary student demonstrators are conducted before and after most *LEAP–NISEP* events, along with surveys of teachers and Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs) one or two months post-event to measure the impacts of these activities. The student surveys always identify increased confidence and interest in science and further education, while the teacher/AEO surveys consistently note improvements in confidence, motivation and an overall interest in study and further education of these students. This is supported in survey findings, where 90 per cent of parents reported that *LEAP–NISEP* activities have influenced their child's confidence in their academic abilities and 100 per cent of teachers reported that *NISEP* activities have influenced students' engagement with science classes.

The findings suggest the program is inspiring greater engagement with school activities, and that the program is raising ambitions, specifically with regard to higher education. There is evidence the program is building capacity, specifically with regard to presentation skills, teamwork skills and increased confidence. This both supports students' schooling and provides some of the long-term skills required by independent learners in higher education. The students identified a number of key components of the program in effecting the positive changes described: the 'hands-on', informal structure, the direct feeling of being 'trusted' and

'involved', and the inspiring influence of mentors, both as team members and Macquarie student volunteers.

Partnership 'Working'

LEAP-NISEP has developed new relationships with schools and communities such that our activities have now engaged a truly national audience. *LEAP-NISEP* have achieved this not just by running programs internally, but by spreading the *NISEP* model of engagement to enthusiastic new partners across the country. These partners have since gone on to develop and run their own local programs in cooperation with schools and Indigenous communities in Western Australia and regional NSW. The initiatives described here represent a considerable effort in professional development, where teachers and community members are trained and inspired whilst attending *LEAP-NISEP* outreach activities with their student volunteers. The partnership works because:

- partnerships were developed after reaching consensus on shared objectives of the program
- there is mutual trust and respect between partners with a shared commitment towards Indigenous students
- it works directly with Indigenous communities in Western Australia and regional NSW to make the program sustainable.

Future Activities

In 2015, *LEAP-NISEP* hopes to build sustainable growth through the development of new partnerships, strengthen relationships with existing partners, and expand its range of science outreach activities. This will be achieved with greater media presence in the form of a website, social media and use of a consistent logo and brand, which will attract a larger national audience and empower existing partners. *LEAP-NISEP* will also incorporate partner schemes such as the Opening Real Science scheme and the Professional and Community Engagement program at Macquarie University to increase student mentoring and science outreach activity capabilities.

SEAMS

Monash University
The University of Melbourne

Inter-university

Strengthening Engagement and Achievement in Mathematics and Science.

Description

SEAMS aims to increase the participation and attainment of LSES and Indigenous students in science and mathematics related disciplines in higher education. The program targets two cohorts: Indigenous students in early secondary school and LSES and Indigenous students in senior secondary school. *SEAMS* engages students in challenging maths and science experiences through residential camps and online activities to encourage engagement and achievement, boosting students' access to a range of university courses.

SEAMS is about improving student engagement and achievement through strategically tailored learning in mathematics and science.

Partners

- Monash University
- University of Melbourne
- John Monash Science School
- Elizabeth Blackburn Science School.

Objectives

SEAMS aims to address a significant and persistent disparity by increasing the participation and attainment of LSES and Indigenous students in tertiary study involving mathematics and science. *SEAMS* is not an aspiration-building intervention; it is about improving student engagement and achievement through strategically tailored curricula, teaching and learning.

The Indigenous Early Years component of *SEAMS* involves Indigenous students in challenging and engaging mathematics and science in a culturally supportive environment, with the aim of encouraging these students to pursue mathematics and science to senior secondary level and into tertiary level.

The Senior Secondary Program focuses on 'front-loading' LSES and Indigenous students' learning in core curricular areas in maths and science to increase their achievement in these fields and so increase their choices for university study.

Activities

SEAMS is an on-campus residential program held twice each year for both target groups. Senior *SEAMS* camps involve three days of mathematics and science classes, mixed with social and recreational events, while the Indigenous Early Years camps are held over two days. Students stay on campus at either Monash University or the University of Melbourne, living in the student accommodation and becoming familiar with the campus layout, sporting and recreational facilities.

The learning activities draw on well-established educational principles. Sessions are designed to increase students' confidence and skill through preparing them in advance for learning experiences, rather than using a remedial model. Sessions are led by highly experienced secondary school teachers, assisted by university students as tutors and mentors. The opportunity to undertake laboratory work in a university environment is particularly important for students from small and often under-resourced schools.

SEAMS creates a cohort of motivated learners who may otherwise be isolated in their mathematics and science study. Students stay in touch and continue engaging with the program through an online learning site and through Facebook. Peer learning is strongly encouraged and supported through the online site, and informally through friendships.

The initial *SEAMS* cohort in January 2014 included 114 Year 11 and 12 students, including students from 28 LSES metropolitan and regional schools. The Indigenous Early Years program attracted 27 Year 8 and 9 students from 13 schools.

Outcomes

Evaluation to date indicate that *SEAMS* is on track to influence student outcomes in mathematics and science, with a consequent effect on university enrolments. Students reported increased confidence, knowledge and skills after participating in *SEAMS* camps:

- 96 per cent of Year 12 *SEAMS* participants agreed that they felt more confident about tackling mathematics at school after completing the camp.
- 92 per cent agreed that their mathematics knowledge had improved.
- 85 per cent agreed that *SEAMS* had improved their science skills.
- Of the Indigenous Early Years cohort, 65 per cent felt more confident about maths and science at school, and 75 per cent enjoyed being part of a group dedicated to learning.

Students will be tracked through the program to measure its longer-term impact.

Partnership 'Working'

The success of *SEAMS* is underpinned by strong senior commitment, a clear shared purpose, open communication and strong project management.

The partnership between Monash University and the University of Melbourne affirms the importance of collaboration on widening participation, even between traditional competitors in student recruitment. The program was initiated following discussions between senior leaders at both institutions about their concerns that current outreach programs were not addressing mathematics and science effectively, particularly for Indigenous students.

"Had a great time, in addition to meeting great likeminded people, I learnt a lot and feel a lot more confident about my studies." – student.

As leading research universities with strong profiles in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics, ensuring a diverse student body in these disciplines is a shared concern. The partners share a commitment to supporting students to achieve their potential, and to ensuring that students from Indigenous and less-privileged backgrounds have access to the same opportunities as other students.

Both universities also sought the involvement of specialist science school partners – John Monash Science School and Elizabeth Blackburn Science School. The schools provided valuable advice on curriculum as well as nominating teachers to be involved in the delivery of the program.

The development and delivery of *SEAMS* involves extensive communication and collaboration within the universities: between Access Monash and the University of

Melbourne's Office for Student Equity; Monash's Yulendj Indigenous Engagement Unit and Melbourne's Murrup Barak Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development; as well as with faculties, residential colleges and student services providers.

SEAMS is managed by a project manager based at Monash University, and overseen by a joint steering committee representing all partners. The project team reviews each activity and incorporates improvements based on student feedback.

Future Activities

SEAMS will expand in 2015 to include 200 students at senior years, and 40 students for the Indigenous Early Years component. The program will seek to involve more schools, and to maintain a balance of regional and metropolitan students.

The aim is for *SEAMS* to develop as a sustainable, high-impact program. In 2015, the senior years camps will focus more closely on chemistry and mathematics as key prerequisites to many university courses in scientific and health fields. Funding options beyond the initial HEPPP grant period are being explored. An ongoing priority for *SEAMS* is to increase recognition and participation from Indigenous students across Victoria, building on the positive experiences of the first cohort.

"Thank you for this great experience and an opportunity to get to know the university."
– student.

MAP4U

Murdoch University
Curtin University
AIME

Intra-university
Inter-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

Description

Murdoch University's *Aspirations and Pathways for University (MAP4U)* program is designed to increase the participation in higher education of under-represented students from the south-west corridor of Perth. Activities include: curriculum and pedagogy initiatives; university–school outreach programs; development of parental support programs and student–teacher pathway planning; development of academic and alternative learning academies within schools, and aligning schools with university pathway programs.

MAP4U uses institutional and community assets to sustain effective programs designed to increase participation in higher education.

Partners

- Murdoch University
- Curtin University
- Challenger Institute of Technology (other TAFE/Colleges)
- AIME – Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
- Department of Education Western Australia
- Catholic Education Office
- Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia
- Rockingham City Council
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA
- Rockingham Education Development Group
- Peel Development Commission
- multiple government, independent and Catholic high schools
- not-for-profit organisations
 - Big Picture Education Australia
 - South Metropolitan Youth Link
 - Youth Connect.

Objectives

Within the project region, the percentage of people aged 15 or over with a degree is nine per cent, well below attainment levels for the Greater Perth Area (16.1 per cent) and Australia (15.6 per cent). *MAP4U's* aim is to increase the tertiary participation of local students through programs implemented by each school and supported by Murdoch through programmatic research and funding allocations.

The partnership allows schools to take the lead in developing programs that fit their communities' and students' learning styles and interests. Grounded methodology underpins

this approach, with programs the result of local inquiry rather than 'off-the-shelf' solutions. The overall objective is to develop sustainable programs that will grow the number of eligible, willing and able students to attend university.

Activities

MAP4U works with 22 high schools to develop sustainable, school-led programs. These partnerships are guided by school/university compacts (MOUs) linking performance indicators, as designed by key stakeholders (including the schools), with each school's context. The resulting programs fall into four categories.

1. *Building Academic Aspirations and Achievement (BAAA)* programs target student, family and community aspiration building. These include the development of inschool academies, pathway planning structures, specific Indigenous mentoring (AIME) and programs designed to develop parents' capacities to support their child's future planning.
2. *Innovative Curriculum and Pedagogy (ICP)* programs include university-school instructional programs that are task-focused and connect students with university mentors that share the same interest and industry professionals. These programs operate for a minimum of six months in order to develop effective relationships between school students and mentors.
3. *Big Picture Academies (BPA)* are schools within schools that focus learning around student interests, with the support of an advisory teacher. Student interest is developed through connection with family and experts from the relevant industry and eventually exhibited. The involvement of the family and community in student learning develops a strong network for advice and support.
4. *University Enabling Programs (UEP)* create non-traditional pathways to university. Students who will not get an ATAR, or who achieve a low ATAR, are able to attend enabling courses with a view to further bridging courses or direct entry into undergraduate degrees.

Over 1,000 students have been surveyed and over 30 students and staff interviewed in the first year of MAP4U. Data collection is focused on student perspectives of their educational and occupation futures and how these are influenced by attitudes, experiences and support networks.

Outcomes

Initial survey data self-reported by students indicate a desire for tertiary education with careers predominantly in the professional and managerial domains. Qualitative feedback from students, staff and principals indicates that program activities are having positive impacts on students' engagement with school, supported by indicators such as attendance and student behaviour.

School engagement with MAP4U has increased substantially, with more schools developing a wider variety of programs. Major compact development includes: 11 AIME and seven school BAAA compacts, 10 ICP compacts, five BPA compacts, and 16 UEP compacts. All schools participate in minor compacts such as participation in science, arts and university-enabling workshops. Participation in task-centred outreach has grown from approximately 30 students in 2013 to over 200 students in 2014. Data shows a doubling in student participation since MAP4U began.

Partnership 'Working'

The challenges facing young people, including Indigenous youth, in the region are understood, and the need for intensive, long-term, labour-intensive interventions is accepted. Interventions that build on existing understandings (local knowledge), networks and local

government priorities and strategies are required. One-off short-term interventions or 'quick fix' responses to complex and protracted educational and social problems are typically unsuccessful. Compact development between key stakeholders has explicit guiding principles, such as community engagement, social inclusion, and youth participatory action research; and considers the unique nature of young people and the characteristics of the local learning environments.

The partnership works because:

- development of a compact occurs over multiple meetings during a 6–12 month period, ensuring the guiding principles are considered and consensus and trust is developed between participants
- an advisory board comprising local stakeholders, academics and leaders in education and community organisations informs the compact development and provides independent feedback
- milestone reporting is structured and survey data from participants is iterative and ensures processes and outcomes are regularly considered and judged upon agreed key performance indicators.

Future Activities

MAP4U will continue to develop strategic relationships with existing partners and develop new partnerships with schools, TAFE institutions, other universities, government departments (e.g. Centrelink) and not-for-profit community groups. *MAP4U* is currently working with schools to integrate initiatives into school strategic planning so that the responsibility for program sustainability is transferred to the individual schools.

The demand for *MAP4U* initiatives has increased with funding restrictions limiting the type and variety of programs state schools can provide. Sourcing funding beyond the current model is a priority for *MAP4U* to ensure the sustainability and expansion of the program beyond the initial three-year period. Project research will focus on the evaluation of program processes and outcomes and changes in school culture. Key performance indicators linked to ATAR completion, course enrolments and pathway program enrolments will be assessed.

Queensland Widening Participation Consortium

Inter-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

The central aim is to stimulate interest in tertiary study and to widen the tertiary participation of LSES and Indigenous Queenslanders.

Description

Queensland's Widening Participation Consortium is designed to improve the participation of LSES and Indigenous people in tertiary education. School outreach involves each partner university working with a cluster of local LSES schools, focusing on activities with Year 6–12 students including demystification and awareness-raising, on-campus experiences, curriculum enrichment, career development, and information on access, scholarships and financial support.

Eight Indigenous engagement initiatives target school students, adult learners, parents and communities, and include mentoring programs, tertiary preparation, and community, school and campus-based events.

The approach builds on institutional strengths and allows for local autonomy, within an overall shared philosophy and approach.

Partners

- Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE)
- Australian Catholic University (ACU)
- Central Queensland University (CQU)
- Griffith University (Griffith)
- James Cook University (JCU)
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
- The University of Queensland (UQ)
- University of Southern Queensland (USQ)
- University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)
- each university has partnerships with multiple schools, community groups and organisations.

Objectives

The *Queensland Widening Participation Consortium's* central aim is to stimulate interest in tertiary study and to widen the tertiary participation of LSES and Indigenous Queenslanders. Queensland has the second highest Indigenous population in Australia (4.2 per cent of the state population) and a significant proportion of residents in regional and remote areas (52 per cent reside outside the greater metropolitan area). These demographics contribute to lower rates of participation in higher education compared with the national average, requiring long-term, sustained and coordinated effort from all higher education institutions. The participating universities designed a collaborative, non-competitive, learner-centred approach; eliminating gaps and duplication across the state; and fostering high quality evidence-based practices.

Activities

Activities are guided by an MOU which outlines the philosophy and approach, scope and scale of the school and Indigenous programs. While university partners share a common philosophy and approach, each university has tailored activities to build on pre-existing programs and respond to local needs.

In 2013, close to 450 schools from all regions of the state were engaged in the program, with approximately 50,000 students taking part in activities including on-campus visits and residential camps; school-based workshops and seminars; career development activities; and science, maths, art, writing, and other curriculum-enriching activities. Undergraduate students, often from the same schools and backgrounds as the school students, have been incorporated extensively as student ambassadors and role models to explain their journeys and inform and inspire younger students.

Activities have also targeted teachers, school leaders and parents, to foster sustained change in beliefs and attitudes about tertiary education. Some cohort-specific activities have targeted Pasifika students (Pacific Islander and Maori peoples), students with disability and refugees. Indigenous engagement activities have built on existing initiatives in each university, are led by Indigenous people, and share a community-engagement approach. Activities have included mentoring and tutoring programs; community events, sports programs and camps; engagement with adults wanting to return to study (including career development services and tertiary preparation programs); and development of undergraduate pathways for people in correctional facilities. Over 1,000 Indigenous school students were involved in mentoring and tutoring activities in 2013, with 1,700 students attending other Indigenous-specific events and activities. Almost 100 Indigenous people enrolled in tertiary preparation or bridging programs connected with the program in 2013.

Outcomes

Qualitative feedback from students, staff and principals indicates that program activities are having positive impacts on students' engagement with school and their interest in pursuing further study. Importantly, the partnerships with schools have matured with greater trust developing between schools and universities. In some LSES schools, evidence is emerging of a new culture where university is both achievable and desirable. A survey of over 6,000 school students in 2013 found agreement with the statement 'I believe it is possible for me to go to university' improved by 15 per cent between pre- and post-attendance at on-campus visits.

Application data from the QTAC shows tertiary application rates for students most engaged in program activities improved by 2.5 per cent between 2012 and 2014.

Partnership 'Working'

The Queensland Higher Education Forum (HEF) established the Widening Participation Working Group in 2009 to investigate collaborative approaches to improving the participation of LSES background people in tertiary education. The group held a series of workshops to develop the partnership which was endorsed by the HEF in an MOU.

The Widening Participation Working Group meets regularly to monitor program implementation, coordinate joint activities, monitor public policy and promote best practice. The group has also convened seminars to showcase the program and enhance practitioner networks. A project manager is located at the DETE offices and coordinates partnership arrangements.

While the MOU sets out a shared philosophy and common approach, each university has maintained its independence in implementing activities to suit its own operational model and

local community needs. A funding distribution model was developed based on the actual costs of providing the planned activities, taking into account the remoteness, scale and complexity of the target community.

The partnership works because:

- partners spent over 12 months building a consensus, encoded in the MOU, before any activities began
- the funding available supported an ambitious up-scaling, resulting in a whole-of-state approach accommodating all stakeholders' interests
- the approach builds on institutional strengths and allows for local institutional autonomy, within an overall shared approach
- the governance arrangements are 'light touch' but unambiguous, with the MOU providing guidance for emerging issues
- high levels of trust have been developed between the partners, with a shared commitment to the importance of the work.

Future Activities

All university partners have realised benefits of collaboration, and have developed relationships with schools and communities which they are keen to maintain. As HEPPP funding comes to a conclusion, new forms of collaboration are being explored. Already some universities have committed institutional funds to maintaining project elements, and some corporate funding is supporting delivery of Indigenous engagement projects. A recently announced Australian Maths and Science Partnership Program grant will work with a number of existing school partnerships to enhance teaching and learning in maths and science, and provide guidance on career and study options in these disciplines.

The Stellar Program

University of New England
Southern Cross University
Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum

Intra-university
Inter-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

A genuine culture of innovation enables new and exciting activities to be trialled.

Description

The Stellar Program seeks to improve university participation rates of students in the Clarence Valley, northern NSW. It facilitates a whole of community approach to encourage the interest, aspirations and attainment of local students who are significantly under-represented at university.

In addition to implementing university outreach activities for students, the program partners with local council and community groups to create events designed to give parents the confidence that university is a possibility for their child.

The Stellar Program has been a catalyst for introducing new ways of being, bringing together education, government bodies, students and the community.

Partners

- Southern Cross University (SCU)
- University of New England (UNE)
- Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum
 - Clarence Valley Council
 - NSW Department of Education and Communities – North Coast Region (DEC)
 - Aboriginal Education Consultative Group – Grafton and Yamba
 - Maclean High School
 - McAuley Catholic College
 - Grafton High School
 - South Grafton High School
 - Induna Education and Training Unit
 - North Coast TAFE
 - Catholic Education Office – Lismore Diocese
 - Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet – Indigenous Affairs Group.

Objectives

The Stellar Program aims to improve university participation rates by increasing knowledge and understanding of university and careers, building confidence and motivation, and improving academic readiness for higher education. Acknowledging the key role of teachers, families and the community in assisting students to reach their potential, the program

develops community-wide partnerships and activities that equip stakeholders to support students.

The Clarence Valley is a rural community of around 50,000 people. In 2011, 32 per cent of the region's households were LSES, compared to 25 per cent in regional NSW. Less than 1.4 per cent of the population are attending a university, below the NSW average of 4.4 per cent. The local Aboriginal population, a key partner for *The Stellar Program*, is large and expected to grow: almost 40 per cent of the Clarence Valley Aboriginal population is aged between 5 and 17 years.

Activities

Activities start in Year 6 with a careers unit of work, careers expo and visit to a university campus; Year 7 in-school events support students to develop their recipe for success at high school and into university; Year 8 students visit a university campus discovering university life through a 'Great Race' style event; Year 9 in-school events focus on university skills, and students also experience an overnight visit to a university campus; and Year 10 students attend in-school careers forums. Online tutorial support is available for students from Year 9–12, with exam resilience sessions for Year 11 and 12 students.

Activities involve peers, role models, parents/carers and teachers, in recognition that young peoples' aspirations and engagement are shaped by key influencers. Community-centred activities include family information evenings, teacher in-service information sessions, community outdoor movie events, participation in community events such as NAIDOC day and sponsorships of local sporting festivals.

Outcomes

The program is having a positive impact on students' and parent's interest and intention towards university. In the Year 7 program (600 students), 73 per cent of students reported being more interested in going to university, and 74 per cent better understood what they had to do to get to university. Following the Year 6 campus event, 93 per cent of students reported being more confident in going to university.

"I enjoyed listening to Year 7 students discussing university options, when they should go and how fun and exciting the day was." – teacher, Year 7 program.

Students report that engaging with current university students from their school or home town about their experiences makes a positive difference to their confidence. Parents/carers report similar benefits after engaging with local parents with students currently at university.

"Even if you're from a small town you can go to a big uni." – Year 7 student.

In 2014, 3,200 students will participate in *The Stellar Program* activities, 600 will benefit from online tutorials, and 650 parents/carers will participate in family/community events.

Partnership 'Working'

The Stellar Program was developed through the Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum, which brought groups together in recognition that individual organisations cannot provide the whole of community approach needed to support students to reach their goals. The partners work through a community of practice approach to make lasting changes that will have a long-term impact, not only for the individual students, but for the community as a whole.

The direction and progress of the program is set by the Steering Committee, with representation from SCU, UNE, the Department of Education and Communities, high school principals and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. Program goals and objectives

were approved after widespread communication and consultation with forum members and other key stakeholders.

Student-centred activities are developed by a Working Group comprising the *Stellar* project team (based at SCU and UNE) and deputy principals from each school, ensuring the activities meet the needs of individual schools, and support and complement school activities. The program's Community Engagement partners (including Clarence Valley Council, local Indigenous organisations, sporting organisations, and individual role models) implement community programs.

The partnership works because:

- *The Stellar Program* is locally developed and addresses locally-identified needs
- a genuine culture of innovation enables new and exciting activities to be trialled
- activities respond to local needs and circumstances
- there is a shared commitment to the importance of the work, and high levels of trust have been developed between the partners
- the HEPPP requirement that funding not be used to promote individual universities ensures that focus remains firmly student/community centred.

Future Activities

Partners have developed close relationships which they are keen to maintain, and have indicated the necessity and desire to continue working together on this initiative. HEPPP-funded activities will continue through 2015 when direct grant funding finishes. Future activities will evolve to meet school and community needs and circumstances.

The Stellar Program will continue to focus on building community relationships as a key platform to provide role models to support parents and carers, who in turn support their children to reach their potential. The program has been a catalyst for introducing new ways of being, bringing together education, government bodies, students and the community.

Children's University Australia

The University of Adelaide

Intra-university

Inter-university

Inter-sectoral

Social/community

CU is well-established and recognised as enhancing academic achievement and increasing student ambition.

Description

Children's University Australia (CU) provides extracurricular learning opportunities to children aged 7–14, and volunteering for 15–18 year olds. *CU* seeks to engage children in learning in its broadest sense and provide the scaffolding to develop self-efficacy, confidence and aspirations. *CU* is child directed; with each child choosing to be involved, and choosing what they would like to participate in. Although open to all, *CU* aims to reach children facing disadvantage and is at the forefront in cultivating children's love of learning and boosting their aspirations.

CU activities are all validated by qualified staff to ensure consistency and a quality learning experience.

Partners

- Children's University Trust UK
- SA Water
- South Australian Museum
- City of Playford
- Carclew (South Australian youth arts organisation)
- South Australian Migration Museum
- Art Gallery of South Australia
- Adelaide City Council
- Adelaide Zoo
- Adelaide Botanic Gardens
- Adelaide Arcade
- Adelaide Festival Centre
- Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute
- Red Cross
- Rundle Mall Group
- Sammy D Foundation
- The University of Adelaide
- The Other Side of Science
- The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for The History of Emotions
- Barr Smith Library
- Confucius Institute (The University of Adelaide)
- Upside Down Circus.

New partnerships continue to be forged between *CU* and public learning spaces in the metropolitan and rural area. Links have been forged between *CU* and many of the facilities

within The University of Adelaide. Partnerships have been made with schools across Adelaide and this is expanding into new metropolitan and regional areas.

Objectives

CU is well-established and recognised as enhancing academic achievement and increasing student ambition. The central aim of *CU* is simple; offering superior educational experiences for children outside of school. Through *CU*, children are encouraged to explore and discover new ideas, concepts and experiences via public and restricted (school-based) 'Learning Destinations'. The model leverages local educational and learning activity providers, including sports clubs, museums, galleries and school clubs. A strong emphasis is placed on acknowledging the value of accessing the wide range of learning experiences and environments in which children engage.

The benefits for students are to extend the learning opportunities beyond school and to assist children in making their own decisions about learning. It allows them to explore and develop new talents and interests and interact with people who have similar interests. *CU* also offers children the chance to manage and measure their own success through receiving certificates and public recognition.

Activities

CU activities take place in Learning Destinations which have been quality assured through the *CU* accredited *Planning for Learning* program (developed by The University of Cambridge). This sets out a well-defined and straightforward process of self-evaluation and planning to ensure that the highest level of quality learning is provided in all *CU*-accredited learning activities. Learning Destinations can range from a museum to a farm to an airport, or even a corporate business, as long as the activity connects with *CU* learning and has credible links to a university program.

Children are issued with a 'Passport to Learning' and 'e-Passports' which record their individual learning journey. For every hour of activity, children receive a stamp in their passport. Credits are accumulated, and when they reach the hours needed to graduate from *CU*, children are awarded certificates at formal graduation ceremonies held in high profile locations, such as Bonython Hall at The University of Adelaide.

Students who participate in the 'Passport to Volunteering' can use *CU* activity towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and South Australian Certificate of Education points and can assist with running *CU* activities, develop leadership skills and graduate attributes.

Outcomes

Evidence from the pilot group showed that children engaged in *CU* activities had increased school attendance, punctuality, and students' behaviour showed marked improvement. Leadership at the school commented that "*participation in Children's University...has improved student behaviour through; student voice, ownership, a sense of belonging and improved engagement and relationships.*" *CU* emphasises the value of accessing the wide range of learning experiences and environments in which children engage. Nurturing successful and independent learners is at the forefront of the *CU* mission; for children to develop resilience, optimism and confidence. Evidence has shown that children who participate in *CU* become more adaptable learners, and able to make their own choices.

The University of Cambridge's evaluation of the program shows that participants have better attendance, attainment and achievement in school. The 10 noted measures of success for *CU* participants are attendance, attainment, achievement, attitudes, adventure, awards, agency, aspiration, adaptability and advocacy.

Partnership 'Working'

CU has established strong links with partner schools and the wider community. The foundation for this network is based on *CU* connecting with partners in meaningful ways to ensure that children have a fun and multifaceted learning experience, whereby each child who participates takes away something unique.

The Learning Destinations recognise that their partnership with *CU*, while benefiting children's learning, also provides them access to new markets. *CU* is also committed to giving teachers professional development opportunities and recognition for their outstanding contributions to their profession.

CU activities are all validated by qualified staff to ensure consistency and a quality learning experience. It is anticipated that in the near future a networking group will be established for Learning Destinations to not only increase their networking opportunities, but also create a community of practice, whereby they can learn from each other. *CU* works hard to initiate and maintain continuous dialogue with its partners.

Future Activities

Various interstate universities have expressed an interest in expanding *CU* and recognise that it is a powerful tool for building community engagement and capacity. This is based on evidence provided by educational research, including the Bradley Review (2008) and the Federal Government's Office for Learning and Teaching (2014), *Can't be what you can't see*. The *CU* community is expanding all the time, with new schools within metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia signing up for 2015. In 2015, *CU* will also be looking to establish greater links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and develop partnerships and learning opportunities that are culturally appropriate and engaging for Indigenous children.

The Aspiration Initiative Family Conference

Australian National University
University of Canberra
The Aspiration Initiative
The Charlie Perkins Trust for Children and Students
The Aurora Project

Inter-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

Both organisations share a commitment to breaking down barriers to higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Description

The Aspiration Initiative (TAI) aims to increase support and opportunities for Indigenous Australian students, helping them realise their potential at school, university and beyond. *TAI* projects include international scholarships, the Indigenous Scholarships website, the Aurora Indigenous Scholars International Study Tour and a five and a half year academic enrichment program for high school students (theaspirationinitiative.com.au). The University of Canberra Aurora Project partnership hosted its first *Family Conference* this year.

Having high expectations is an important part of our approach in working with students, teachers and families.

Partners

- University of Canberra (UC)
- the Aurora Project
- The Australian National University (ANU)
- Commonwealth Department of Education
- Charlie Perkins Trust for Children and Students
- ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group.

Objectives

TAI's academic enrichment program breaks down barriers to higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It provides intensive and ongoing educational and related support, primarily during holiday periods (academic camps), and also throughout the academic year. There are currently programs operating in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, with 90 students. The program started when students were in Year 8 and continues for five and a half years. The recent *Family Conference* for parents and carers of *TAI* students held at UC in July 2014 was designed to share knowledge, increase families' understanding of how to support their children's academic aspirations, and provide information about higher education.

Activities

The project partners are mindful of the importance of engaging not just with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students but also with their families. Building ongoing relationships with the students' families is a key part of the *TAI* academic enrichment program. From 25–27

July 2014, 18 parents and carers of students participating in *TAI's* academic enrichment program in NSW and Victoria attended a *Family Conference* at UC. For many, this was their first time on a university campus.

Formal and informal sessions provided families with information about how they can best support their children through Years 11 and 12 and into university. Parents and carers were provided with information about study strategies, university admission processes, tertiary scholarships and adolescent social and emotional wellbeing. Family members were also given an opportunity to network with each other and with *TAI* and UC staff. Getting a feel for a university environment and the on-campus accommodation options available for students was a highlight for many of the participants.

In addition to the *TAI* and UC staff members participating in the conference, a number of visitors met with the families, including representatives from ANU, the Commonwealth Department of Education, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group, and the ACT Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

Families provided excellent ideas regarding how we can better work with them over the next few years and keep them informed, engaged and involved in the children's journeys. For example, during the conference, families helped plan the next *TAI* camp curriculum around the theme of 'growth'.

Outcomes

In a survey completed on the last day, 100 per cent of participants agreed that their expectations of the *Family Conference* were met, the conference was useful, beneficial and relevant, and that they would attend another conference. In addition, all participants agreed that it was extremely valuable to meet the *TAI* staff.

"Meeting all the parents and getting to know them and getting to see how TAI works together. It was really good to know that I'm not the only one going through it; everyone else is going through the same thing with their kids, their teenagers." – participant.

Partnership 'Working'

In August 2012, the UC entered into a partnership with the Aurora Project to run several *TAI* initiatives. HEPPP funds were subsequently received to support the initiative, with support also provided by other groups and organisations. UC and *TAI* share a commitment to breaking down barriers to higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and this commitment is fundamental to the strength of the partnership.

The partnership works because we have a clear set of expectations for both partners, detailed within a contract. We maintain frequent contact through phone conversations, face-to-face meetings, and regular meetings of our joint management group. UC's Dean of Students sits on the *TAI* advisory committee, and provides input into the program's objectives, operations and evaluations. Staff members from both organisations interact at key events and activities and work collaboratively around key issues such as risk management and program evaluation. Both organisations share a common philosophy that having high expectations is an important part of our approach in working with students, teachers and families. We also believe that the support has to be both broad and deep, and that having meaningful relationships not just with the students but with their schools, families and communities is important for the success of the project. We have learnt that it is important to maintain a frequent and open dialogue, which builds trust and ensures the smooth running of joint activities.

"Mental health session was invaluable and in hindsight could have been more comprehensive and gone longer." – participant.

Future Activities

Upcoming activities include *TAI*'s tenth camp for students, to be held in Moruya, NSW and Melbourne, Victoria. The camp is designed for Year 11 students and the theme of the camp is 'growth'. The camp will focus on political literacy and the development of an academic voice and standpoint. The camp will explore how students engage with *TAI* and the world – socially, culturally and academically – and will culminate in students producing writing that will be published on Dusseldorp's online education and learning forum (dusseldorp.org.au/). In January 2015 the first *TAI* national camp will be held, with the aim of expanding students' support networks and offering educationally enriching activities that assist with senior study skills and focus on transition to university. Further government funding for the project has been received, which will allow us to undertake new activities.

"The sessions were all really informative but the most memorable would have to be the passion from all mentors and people involved, it is truly inspiring." – participant.

Centennial Parklands Education Access Pass

Centennial Parklands
University of New South Wales

Inter-sectoral Social/community

The UNSW *ASPIRE*/Centennial Parklands partnership highlights to students the diverse skills required to manage eco-systems.

Description

In late 2013 the UNSW *ASPIRE* Program joined with the Centennial Parklands Foundation to offer opportunities for students from disadvantaged, regional and remote schools to visit Sydney's iconic Centennial Parklands precinct.

A total of 391 students from 22 schools benefitted from the *Centennial Parklands Education Access Pass*, an initiative to support outdoor environmental education, science and Indigenous excursions for students who may otherwise not be able to participate due to their low socio-economic status.

Staff from the Education Precinct at Centennial Parklands work closely with UNSW ASPIRE to tailor activities appropriate to the varying interests and needs of visiting school groups.

Partners

- University of New South Wales (UNSW)
- Centennial Parklands Education
- Centennial Parklands Foundation
- ASPIRE Partner Schools.

Objectives

For students living in outer-urban, rural and remote areas, as well as those from low-income households and Indigenous backgrounds, the difficulty in accessing and cost of (often limited) public transport places them at a disadvantage. These students have limited ability to engage with environments beyond their immediate neighbourhood. In bringing students from LSES communities in south-western Sydney and regional NSW to Centennial Parklands, this partnership overcomes the issue of social exclusion as a result of transport disadvantage. It aims to open students' eyes to a broader spectrum of educational and career opportunities, such as those presented by the existence of green spaces in urban environments.

The *ASPIRE*/Centennial Parklands partnership highlights to students the importance of managing eco-systems and the diverse skills and qualifications required to do so. Explicit connections are made between activities, the broad degree programs to which they relate, and the subsequent career pathways available to graduates.

Activities

Staff from the Education Precinct at Centennial Parklands work closely with UNSW *ASPIRE* to tailor activities appropriate to the varying interests and needs of visiting school groups.

Experiential learning in the Parklands features the Botany Wetlands, Lachlan Swamp, Casuarina woods, a fresh water aquifer, Banksia scrubland and the Parklands' large fruit bat colony. The Parklands' Indigenous Ranger conducts a walkabout tour through the park, sharing insights into the Indigenous history of Sydney and this large tract of preserved green space. Further activities include bushcraft and animal tracking.

The program actively engages students in scientific methodologies and investigations such as classification of species, water quality testing, environmental impact studies, and exploration of the factors influencing the growth, development, adaptation and diversity of ecosystems. Park rangers connect these activities to relevant school curriculum and to opportunities for further study at tertiary level.

Participants have represented the broad diversity of UNSW *ASPIRE*'s partner schools and communities. In December 2013, 140 Year 6 students from primary schools in southwestern Sydney combined a day of environmental science activities with a 'Transition to High School' focus, linking notions of adaptation, diversity, resilience and environment within each theme. In both 2013 and 2014, Centennial Parklands hosted 70 students from regional and remote UNSW *ASPIRE* partner schools for a morning of activities exploring the diversity and ingenuity of Indigenous culture, the issues associated with sustaining healthy ecosystems in urban areas, and debate around the relative merits or otherwise of city and country living. Additionally, 107 Year 10 students from four metropolitan high schools gained insight into the options available within the senior science curriculum as they prepared to make subject choices prior to commencing the Higher School Certificate.

Outcomes

Qualitative feedback from students and teachers indicates that activities offered are engaging and valuable. Teachers report that students leave the park precinct with a broadened understanding of study and career opportunities available to them, as well as a sense (in the case of regional students) that living in a large city such as Sydney might be possible and enjoyable for them.

"(The activities) have shown students what it is like to be out in the world and started to open their eyes to opportunities available to them." – teacher.

Following the Year 6 activities linked with high school transition, the percentage of students who reported feeling 'nervous' about going to high school fell from 22 per cent prior to engaging in the activities, to six per cent afterwards.

"I will tell my family that it was fun and it was the best time of my school life!" – Year 6 student.

Partnership 'Working'

Funded by the Centennial Parklands Foundation, the *Centennial Parklands Education Access Pass* is an opportunity for students from disadvantaged, regional and remote schools to visit the Parklands. The Foundation has donated 9,000 student places over three years to enable the Centennial Parklands Education Precinct to offer outdoor Bush School and Indigenous-themed environmental education sessions.

The integration of both Western and Indigenous knowledges in each activity provides a particular partnership benefit, especially in relation to UNSW *ASPIRE*'s commitment to students from remote communities. Indigenous students visiting Sydney for the first time engage more readily with content and concepts when delivered in a culturally responsive manner and illustrated by familiar examples.

Working with 57 schools in disadvantaged, rural and remote communities, and being located in close proximity to Centennial Parklands, the UNSW *ASPIRE* Schools Outreach program

was perfectly positioned to support the Parklands Education team to achieve their target of working with 6,000 school students in 2013 and 2014. A shared vision ensures efficient use of resources to meet key performance indicators for each organisation. The capacity of the Centennial Parklands Education team to adapt its core activities and accommodate the additional 'Widening Participation' focus of the UNSW *ASPIRE* program has further strengthened the partnership.

UNSW *ASPIRE* is committed to providing partner schools with fully-funded opportunities for students to participate in academic enrichment activities which promote awareness of, aspiration to, and attainment of tertiary education. In partnering with Centennial Parklands, UNSW *ASPIRE* is able to direct the benefit of the Centennial Parklands Foundation's philanthropic support towards its target recipients in a strategic and mutually beneficial manner.

Future Activities

UNSW *ASPIRE* is focusing its partnership efforts in 2015–2017 upon the collaborative development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related academic enrichment resources and opportunities in order to engage students in the primary and early secondary years. The ongoing relationship with Centennial Parklands will be an integral feature of this targeted approach.

Uni4You

The University of Newcastle Australia
Communities for Children (Raymond Terrace and Karuah)
The Smith Family
The Family Action Centre

Intra-university Social/community

Innovative practice enables the support required for successful engagement and completion of study by marginalised adults.

Description

Uni4You, introduced in Raymond Terrace/Karuah (Hunter Region, NSW) in 2013, has since expanded to include Cessnock and North Lakes (Central Coast, NSW). It provides activities to support the engagement of economically and geographically marginalised adults in the University of Newcastle's (UON) enabling program, *Open Foundation*. Educational aspiration is stimulated through pre-enrolment study and information sessions in accessible locations within the communities. Weekly study meetings encourage students' successful completion of *Open Foundation*.

The pilot program has shown the potential Uni4You could achieve in the long term not only for individuals, but also in communities where Uni4You is delivered.

Partners

- University of Newcastle
 - Family Action Centre (FAC), Faculty of Health and Medicine
 - AIM HIGH Program
 - English Language and Foundation Studies (ELFS)
- The Smith Family
- Irrawang Public School
- Thou Walla Family Centre Schools and Community Centre, Irrawang Public School
- Cessnock East Public School
- San Remo Neighbourhood Centre.

Objectives

The Hunter region experiences high levels of non-engagement in tertiary education by adults (20 years and above), often due to a lack of awareness about access pathways and understanding of the support available to enable successful completion. Many individuals in these communities have disengaged with study early and experienced long-term unemployment, yet demonstrate intelligence and aspiration for change.

Uni4You uses the extensive outreach experience of the FAC to provide information and support to adults that either may have never identified tertiary study as an option for them, or have previously attempted tertiary study but not succeeded due to socio-environmental factors.

By combining the expertise of three of UON's units (Equity and Diversity through the AIM HIGH Program, ELFS and the FAC), information and innovative practice is shared, enabling

the wrap-around support that is required for successful engagement and completion of study by marginalised adults.

Activities

Uni4You offers an integrated program of support and activities to further encourage and support students, which complement the traditional activities offered to enabling program students.

Program coordinators, who have extensive experience in community and family work, engage with schools, early childhood centres, child and family services and similar organisations to promote and encourage potential participants to engage in *Open Foundation* via online study or on campus. Intensive outreach prepares students for *Open Foundation* through activities such as home visits, pre-enrolment information, and study preparation sessions including academic writing and mathematics refreshers.

Once enrolled, intensive support from the program coordinators continues and weekly tutorial support sessions facilitated by university-appointed tutors commence. The peer support enabled from these sessions has been a program highlight to date. The program coordinators also continue to promote and develop pathways and relationships in the communities to engage with greater numbers of potential students.

Childcare, text books, wifi and computers are tangible resources supplied by the program partners that many students have accessed. Measures are now also being taken to ensure an inclusive, whole-of-family approach to educating families in ways to support the student and engage in the change process around study. The program represents an important opportunity for adults from marginalised communities to gain assistance in making decisions regarding tertiary study, and in maintaining participation at university.

Outcomes

Uni4You has been offered in the communities of Raymond Terrace/Karuah from mid-2013. Seventeen individuals from this community enrolled in *Open Foundation* in 2014 as a result of information sessions and home visits conducted by the project coordinator. This represented a 58 per cent enrolment increase in the community from 2013.

Nine of the 17 students participated in a mid-year evaluation, which confirmed students continued studying because of *Uni4You* support. Program coordinators, weekly tuition sessions with child care provisions, and information and skills preparation sessions were acknowledged as valuable by most students.

Partner organisations acknowledge the potential *Uni4You* could achieve in the long term, not only for individuals, but also for its ability to influence social and cultural identity change in communities where it is delivered. *Uni4You* also provides further learnings in relation to some of the challenges faced by prospective students in gaining knowledge about and accessing support they might require from a university setting.

Partnership 'Working'

In Raymond Terrace/Karuah, *Uni4You* was initially funded by The Smith Family, through the Australian Government's *Communities for Children* initiative, an initiative which seeks to address disadvantage for families with children aged 0–12 years. The expansion and continuation was enabled through HEPFP funds. The UON has a strong relationship with The Smith Family and together recently launched an MOU. Both partners plan to continue working together on this and other community-based programs into the future.

Activities of *Uni4You* are conducted through local schools, schools as community centres, and neighbourhood centres. Infrastructure support is offered by these organisations,

including wifi, access to laptops and other computer devices. These community partnerships are vital as they encourage individuals to attend as they are easy to access and familiar (many students are parents). Child care is provided by the partners and they ensure all risk management is appropriately undertaken. UON has a trusting, mutually respectful relationship with the community partners, as all organisations are contributing to the *Uni4You* Program.

Future Activities

Further promotion and scheduling of *Uni4You* activities will occur in each area of current influence. Additional support for students' partners and extended family will also be offered. A factor in the withdrawal from studies by marginalised mature-aged students is a lack of support through the change process that occurs through tertiary study. Increased community development to enhance understating and appreciation for tertiary study will be ongoing, enlisting the support of additional schools and local non-government agencies. Additional communities will be offered some *Uni4You* support activities as the impact on families and communities becomes clearer. It has been important to embed evaluation into the program, as this has assisted in guiding the program: this will be expanded as activity and student numbers increase.

UniSA Partnerships

University of South Australia
AIME

Intra-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

Developing long-term relationships based on negotiation establishes a partnership capable of responding to teachers' knowledge of student needs.

Description

Four key programs focus on capacity building and academic achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and graduates. These programs include the Deadly Alumni; Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience; South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy; and the Aboriginal Power Cup. All of these programs are funded under the HEPPP.

Forming productive partnerships with those who design and deliver secondary school curriculum allows for the exchange of ideas.

Partners

- University of South Australia (UniSA)
- Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) and the South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy (SAASTA)
- Tauondi College
- Port Adelaide Football Club
- Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME).

Objectives

UniSA's central objective is to become the university of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in South Australia and beyond. By developing respectful and sustainable partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, our aim is to deliver better educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Taken together, the four inter-related programs respond to the *Behrendt Review*, in particular to the recommendation about refocusing HEPPP activity on developing academic skills in the areas of maths and science; building peer and family networks; and providing Years 10 to 12 with mentoring, pathway support and case management and academic enrichment programs.

Activities

The Deadly Alumni provides graduates with professional development and networking opportunities; AIME delivers mentoring support to secondary students; the SAASTA Academy (which includes the Aboriginal Power Cup) supports Years 10 to 12 curriculum development and revision linked to the Australian Curriculum and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) and provides deeper engagement with STEM learning concepts.

The Deadly Alumni is only in the early stages of operation, however, its champions have the community respect necessary to make an outstanding contribution. The Alumni is linked with the AIME program where UniSA graduates act as role-models and give back to the community by mentoring secondary Indigenous students. AIME is an interactive mentoring program that supports Indigenous students through high school, and delivers a range of programs. Schools can elect either to be involved in Core or Elective Program delivery.

SAASTA and the Aboriginal Power Cup utilises sport to engage Indigenous Australian secondary students, improve student achievement and enhance understanding of higher education and positive life choices. The Aboriginal Power Cup is now in its seventh year of operation. Student participation is linked to the study of a SACE unit, coordinated by SAASTA. The unit culminates with a three day carnival which incorporates the football competition, leadership skills, workshops and career information. It is important to acknowledge that the winners of the Aboriginal Power Cup are those students who achieve in the academic curriculum.

Outcomes

The Alumni was launched at UniSA in August 2014. A formal chapter is being finalised and further partnerships with the Indigenous Internship Program (Career Trackers) are being developed. Sixty-six UniSA Indigenous Alumni will be potentially involved in the Deadly Alumni in 2014/15.

2013 was the first year the AIME program operated at the UniSA. To date, UniSA has 118 mentors and 301 mentees participating in the program across 20 schools. According to a 2014 evaluation report, AIME is making a strong contribution to achieving the target to halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates (by 2020).

In 2014, a new SAASTA Academy commenced at UniSA's Mawson Lakes Campus with 52 students enrolled. The educational program engages students via sport, and uses this engagement as a way to improve student achievement and increase awareness of higher education pathways.

Ninety per cent of students involved in the Aboriginal Power Cup achieved Stage 1 and 2 SACE units in 2013. Forty-three Year 12 students used the cultural and sporting components of the Aboriginal Power Cup to achieve a pass grade in their Integrated Learning Stage 2 subject that directly contributes towards achieving their SACE. Many of these students used the subject to achieve an ATAR, thus assisting them with qualifications for university entry.

Partnership 'Working'

UniSA College was established by UniSA in 2011. In addition to implementing the university's *Participation Strategy*, it is contributing to the goals identified in our recently launched *Reconciliation Action Plan*.

The head of the college is a member of the UniSA's Directors Group and a member of the Indigenous Participation, Education and Employment Group. The head of the college works closely with the Dean of Indigenous Scholarship, Engagement and Research to conceptualise and deliver HEPPP programs. In relation to the partnership with SAASTA, the *UniSA College* team meet regularly. A partnership agreement has been developed and an Academy at Mawson Lakes Campus established.

The partnerships work because:

- Policy initiatives like the *Behrendt Review* and the desire to make a difference in STEM outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has driven partnership activity.
- Partners spend significant time assembling resources, working through effective ways to engage learners and work together. These include a shared approach to curriculum development for secondary students and supportive and targeted resourcing including *UniSA College* staff time.
- The partnership agreement was written collaboratively with shared objectives, outcomes and deliverables.
- The SAASTA academic programs are delivered in the Maths and Science Centre at Mawson Lakes Campus which provides a creative learning space designed to engage secondary students in maths and science activity.

Future Activities

UniSA will continue to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and stakeholders. *UniSA College* will maintain and expand our partnership with SAASTA.

In addition to the continuation of existing program activities, a new partnership between UniSA and the Port Adelaide Football Club (PAFC) will extend the focus on Aboriginal education. The new partnership has a commitment to remote communities, and will include PAFC's *WillPOWER* program, which is designed to motivate young Aboriginal people to attend school. The partnership will see program activity extended into Maralinga and the Ananju Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. The partnership will seek to increase the school retention rate of Aboriginal students in remote communities and also study the impact improved health and nutrition can have on education outcomes.

Small Town Culture

University of Southern Queensland

Inter-sectional Social/community

The success of the partnership can be credited to shared goals, enthusiasm and commitment to the program.

Description

Small Town Culture is a music label developed by Josh Arnold, an accomplished singer and song-writer, and supported by the University of Southern Queensland, to enable students from schools and communities in LSES, rural and remote regions of Australia to have their voices heard. Josh delivers workshops and helps students to write, sing and perform music about their home towns and their aspirations for the future. The work builds self-confidence in students from culturally diverse and Indigenous backgrounds, encourages school engagement and attendance and promotes pride in school and community.

The ultimate objective of the program is to empower students to make choices about their future that results in improved higher education participation.

Partners

- University of Southern Queensland (USQ)
- Queensland Department of Education Training and Employment (DETE)
- Small Town Culture
- 80 primary and secondary schools in the Education Queensland Darling Downs and South West Region.

Objectives

The ultimate aim of the *Small Town Culture* program is to empower students to make choices about their future that results in improved higher education participation. This is achieved by building self-confidence in students and pride in their school and community, and encouraging school engagement and attendance.

The program is funded by the HEPPP, and USQ partnered with *Small Town Culture* in order to build relationships with primary and secondary schools, and promote the importance of self-confidence in enabling students to make the decision to study beyond school. The partnership gives students the opportunity to interact with the university in a nonthreatening environment that encourages a connection with higher education.

Activities

Activities at each school follow a general pattern of relationship building, workshops, rehearsals, choreography, filming and production. Each school tailors the program to the needs of their community, their overall objectives and approach, and their scale and budget. The final product is a recorded song or number of songs on CD or DVD, iTunes, YouTube and other social media. Often there is also a launch event that brings the school and community together to celebrate the efforts of the students and the uniqueness and beauty of their region.

The program has been delivered in 80 schools in the Darling Downs and South West Region in Queensland to date, reaching over 3,700 students and many more parents and community members. Over 40 songs have been written and recorded, and engagement on social media has increased significantly. The program has been profiled by *ABC Landline* and has had significant other media attention, locally and state-wide.

Activity in schools has been further developed by having the students come to the USQ Toowoomba Campus to perform and engage in interactive sessions to encourage and motivate them towards higher education. Talented students will participate in the USQ McGregor Summer School, which provides intensive tuition on song-writing and contemporary voice and gives students the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded students from similar backgrounds and regions.

Outcomes

Small Town Culture was evaluated in 2013 and continues to be evaluated in 2014. Surveys were distributed to students, principals, teachers and community members who were involved in the workshops, production of clips and community engagement aspects of the program.

The data shows an overwhelmingly positive response to the workshops and to Josh as a teacher and mentor. Almost all responders indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to continue working with *Small Town Culture*, and rated the experience as exceedingly positive for students, schools and communities.

Comments from surveys indicated an increased sense of pride in the community and an exceptionally positive experience for the students, leading to a range of outcomes.

“Josh brings positivity and enthusiasm, which our kids respond to positively. What he brings is something our kids need in order to develop a greater sense of self-belief and self-confidence. The program is amazing in terms of what it does and can do for individuals, schools and communities.” – school principal.

Partnership ‘Working’

The success of the partnership between *Small Town Culture* and USQ can be credited to their shared goals, enthusiasm and commitment to the program, trust between the partners and effective communication.

The partnership was established because USQ recognised the existing relationships and quality of work that had been initiated by Josh. When the partnership was formed, Josh already had experience within the school context and was working towards building regional resilience and pride – goals shared by USQ. The success of the relationship can be attributed to the shared interest in providing students in regional areas with the opportunity to have their voices heard and self confidence developed. USQ believes that working with schools and communities in all regions supports inclusive society, contributes to nation building and progresses regional wellbeing.

The partnership is marked by clearly defined goals and expectations, and the trust shared between Josh and USQ enables Josh to provide the direction that *Small Town Culture* needs to achieve success, and make decisions to guide the future of the program. To maintain and advance the trust relationship, monthly progress reports have been established to provide information on movement and budgeting.

Small Town Culture operates in diverse and often geographically remote areas, and the need for effective communication is essential to delivering timely outcomes and to meet assessment and reporting requirements. Regular meetings between partners take place

where possible, and informal phone calls and emails provide frequent updates on the day-to-day progress of the program in schools.

Future Activities

As *Small Town Culture* has evolved and the success of the program has become more widely known, the need to expand its content has become apparent. A *Small Town Culture* Camp has recently been funded to bring together talented students from regional and remote areas of southwest Queensland. Those students will work with musicians and music producers to develop their musicality and build relationships with peers that will help in their future studies and life beyond school.

Funding for the program beyond 2014 is being reviewed and it is hoped that the partnership will continue. Schools have expressed their interest in hosting the program in 2015 and 2016, and many are working to make funds available so that their reliance on external and USQ funding is reduced.

Compass Film and Animation Workshops

The University of Sydney

Intra-university

Inter-university

Inter-sectoral

Social/community

The accessibility of digital media has made the FPSMA workshops highly relevant across a number of disciplines.

Description

Since 2010, The University of Sydney's *Compass – your way to higher education program (Compass)* has been delivering Film Production and Stop Motion Animation (FPSMA) workshops with partner schools. The programs deliver highly engaging workshops that reinforce communication, team work, problem solving, creativity, literacy and digital literacy skills. FPSMA sits within the *Compass* program, which seeks to address the under-representation in higher education of students from LSES backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and regional students.

The experiential nature of the creative imagining of a narrative and depiction of the story arc using digital technology results in increased technical and production skills for the students involved.

Partners

- The University of Sydney
 - Sydney College of the Arts
 - Faculty of Education and Social Work
 - Sydney Medical School
- Souths Cares
- Centipede (Out Of School Hours Care)
- 25 metropolitan and regional NSW primary and secondary schools.

Objectives

FPSMA workshops are two of a suite of 28 projects delivered in *Compass* partner schools. Projects are developed with schools using principles of community development to ensure that content is relevant, aligns with key learning areas in the curriculum, meet school plan outcomes and provide learning enrichment in areas identified by the school community.

The accessibility of digital media has made the FPSMA workshops highly relevant across a number of disciplines, and suitable to help meet the Australian Curriculum outcomes, including the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) continuum and the Critical and Creative Thinking continuum.

Working with academics and project staff ensure that meaningful links between interests and future options in higher education are reinforced. Teaching and learning capacity in literacy is also supported through creative imagining of a narrative, adoption of story arc conventions and associative connections between visual and written communication methodologies.

Activities

FPSMA comprises professional development, six eight-week school-based workshops, and an on-campus premiere event. These components work to increase teacher capacity and practical skills in technology and its use in curriculum, support key learning area outcomes, and build links to higher education.

In-school coordinators and teachers attend a professional development day prior to delivering the course to produce their own film or animation. The professional development reflects the school-based workshops, ensuring teachers understand the format and technology required, as well as promoting an exchange of ideas on embedding the use of film and digital technologies into the curriculum.

The school-based workshops with the students guarantee ongoing interaction with university staff and students, who provide regular technical and academic support. The versatility of the workshop content provides relevance to a range of key learning areas for both primary and high school curricula.

Since 2010, over 1,650 students and 200 teachers across 25 schools have participated in *Compass*' FPSMA workshops. The program culminates in an end-of-year showcase, where all schools are invited on-campus for a 'red carpet' film premiere. This visit reinforces a tertiary point of reference and provides another opportunity for students to forge links with the university.

Schools buy their own equipment as part of their contribution to the program and after the first year, 'veteran' teachers run the project independently, with the option of a consultative model which provides three touch-points with an academic to support them.

The program is also implemented in community-based settings with Souths Cares and Centipede, run through the Faculty of Education and Social Work, to engage young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary and high school students.

Outcomes

The experiential nature of the program results in increased technical and production skills for the students involved. The collaborative nature of the film projects also builds significant team work skills.

Qualitative feedback from students and staff reflect success in achieving these outcomes: *"The students are highly engaged with the project and very motivated to get the work done. Every student has a role and the benefits for group work and team building are huge."* – secondary school teacher.

In addition, some teachers expressed pleasure that they have also seen their own skills develop: *"I was never really that confident in teaching the creative arts, and particularly film and video production. [However] I have now developed two integrated themes for my students [...] previously that just wouldn't have been possible."* – primary school teacher.

Partnership 'Working'

Compass builds cumulative impact and includes programs to enhance educational outcomes, increase understanding of the value of higher education, and promote students' educational confidence. This is achieved through partnerships with school communities, non-government organisations, intra-university partners and inter-university collaborations. In 2011, MOUs were signed with our school and community partners to bring together our shared vision to achieve these outcomes. Schools can tailor the elements or activities of the program that best suit their particular circumstances.

The partnership works as a result of the following factors:

- consultation meetings with schools are held towards the end of each year, allowing time for schools to embed *Compass* projects in school planning
- direct links to key learning areas, curriculum outcomes and school goals
- focus on professional development as a foundation for program sustainability
- flexible modes of delivery support schools at differing stages
- coordinators and designated teachers are assigned in each school to ensure ownership, direction and support of the program
- activities are not delivered as one-off events; each activity is scaffolded with either pre- and post-engagement, or are delivered as place-based projects running up to eight weeks
- clear roles and responsibilities are assigned to both *Compass* and school staff
- ongoing evaluation occurs both internally and via external evaluators to ensure constant monitoring and improvement of projects.

Future Activities

FPSMA continues to be a highly valued program in *Compass* partner schools. As grant funding finishes, new sources of funding are being investigated to ensure the longevity of the program. A school-contribution model will be trialled to supplement existing funds. As a long-term sustainability strategy, *Compass* will work with the Sydney College of Arts and the Faculty of Education and Social Work to develop either a service learning opportunity for pre-service teachers to deliver these workshops in schools, or a volunteer option for experienced university students to run the workshops.

Pathways to Success

University of Tasmania

Intra-university

Inter-sectoral

Social/community

Pathways to Success aims to raise aspirations and expose pathways to higher education among Aboriginal people, and people of LSES.

Description

The University of Tasmania aims to increase participation in higher education and enable current and future students, families and communities to engage with career possibilities aligned with Tasmania's industries of the future: food, tourism, advanced manufacturing and health. Tasmanians targeted identify as Aboriginal or from LSES backgrounds. Partnerships with industry, schools, Aboriginal corporations, non-government organisations and local government underpin the project.

Partners

- University of Tasmania (UTAS)
- Tasmanian Department of Education (DoE)
- Parks and Wildlife Services (PWS)
- TasTAFE
- The Smith Family
- Colony 47
- Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation
- Six Rivers Aboriginal Corporation
- South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation
- weetapoona Aboriginal Corporation
- Guilford Young College
- St James Catholic College
- Burnie City Council.

The partnership works well due to shared understandings and goals, and a strong sense of synchronicity between the ambitions of the industry and education partners.

Objectives

Almost half of Tasmania's population is defined as LSES. Aboriginal people represent almost four per cent of Tasmania's population but only 1.25 per cent of university enrolments in 2011. This project delivers initiatives to ensure these groups can participate in a future skilled economy. *Pathways to Success* specifically targets four regions that include over 83 per cent of Tasmania's LSES population and 87 per cent of those who identify as Aboriginal. *Pathways to Success* aims to increase participation in higher education through initiatives which build aspiration, provide smooth transitions and enable current and future students, families and communities to engage with careers aligned with Tasmania's industries of the future. Desired participant outcomes include informed and lifted aspirations and understanding of the value of higher education, and an improved rate of successful

transitions to higher education courses that are preparation for jobs in industries of the future.

Activities

Initiatives are grouped into three subprograms:

1. *What's After High School* – informing and building aspiration beyond high school by introducing students, families, communities and teachers to university and the industries that will provide future jobs.
2. *Look in at Jobs* – familiarising students, families, and communities with future jobs, facilitated by industry liaison officers.
3. *Skills for Professionals* – exposing articulated pathways, enabling supported transitions from secondary college and TasTAFE to university or university preparation programs. Particularly emphasising the value of education to Aboriginal communities, working age adults, and employers.

An example initiative is Aboriginal Cultural Excursions. Aboriginal students participate through trusting relationships formed with service providers including TasTAFE's Aboriginal Training Program. Excursions to Parks and Wildlife reserves provide an environment for participants to learn about jobs in tourism, guiding, interpretation and environmental conservation along with relevant educational pathways. This initiative is facilitated by a PWS interpretation and education officer, Aboriginal trainee rangers and a local Aboriginal Elder to provide insight, personal experiences, information on education pathways and mentoring to Aboriginal participants. An on-campus experience following the excursion provides insight into university study and support programs available to smooth the transition into higher education.

Enabling teachers to provide guidance and encouragement through information regarding pathways is essential to support project activities. Feast of Knowledge is an initiative which offers educators a first-hand look at developments within the food and tourism industries. Through industry site visits and university and TAFE on-campus experiences, participants are exposed to a diverse array of jobs along with skill requirements, information on skill shortages and qualifications required. The goal in this instance is exposing the future skills required, together with explicit pathways into industry-specific job areas.

Outcomes

Outcomes from *Pathways to Success* initiatives are qualitative to date. Feedback from participants suggests the Aboriginal Cultural Excursions provided valuable information and inspiring personal journeys from industry representatives. The format was considered engaging, and led to the objectives of the excursions: greater awareness of future jobs in tourism, Aboriginal culture and natural heritage. Participants indicated a clearer understanding of the relevant training and skills required to pursue a career in tourism. The Aboriginal trainee rangers' sharing of personal stories was especially valuable in encouraging and providing insight into education and career possibilities.

Feedback from teachers and staff indicates deeper understanding of pathway options to tertiary education, and bolstered ability to provide advice to students on career options.

Partnership 'Working'

Pathways to Success is actively developing partnerships relevant to each industry and region. Partnerships are founded on shared understandings and goals, and a strong sense of synchronicity between the ambitions of the involved organisations.

Funding has allowed for the provision of dedicated human resources to develop and maintain partnerships. *Pathways to Success* industry liaison officers are boundary-crossers

who understand the worlds of both industry and education. These key staff work between the sectors to negotiate initiatives that work for industry, education providers, and most importantly students and future students. For example, Aboriginal Cultural Excursions is the product of time spent developing collaborative, trusting and enthusiastic partnerships, founded on clearly defined mutual goals, between PWS and *Pathways to Success*. The same project also relies on trusting collaborative relationships with education providers such as TasTAFE.

Industry liaison officers have successfully developed strong relationships within the four key industries of the future. These relationships have been strengthened by the development of explicit goals, strong role definition and effective communication. Feast of Knowledge is an example of these partnerships at work. Initial discussions with food and tourism industries, TasTAFE and the DoE to develop the pilot initiative have helped to establish strong commitment from stakeholders.

Future Activities

Campus Open Days and Evenings are planned with a focus on the four key *Pathways to Success* industries. Speakers will be highlighting the jobs of the future and educational pathways to these jobs. Industry ambassadors will also be guest speakers within TasTAFE classrooms.

Health-focused initiatives include career information sessions for current support workers in aged care and disability. They will be delivered by Faculty of Health representatives and multidisciplinary health professionals on campus, providing scenario-based discussion around health careers.

Advanced manufacturing initiatives include Developing Regional Interest in Future Technologies. The aim is to develop positive relationships between schools, students and industry while showcasing authentic learning experiences in local advanced manufacturing industries. Mapping the Connections is another future project to provide a state-wide audit of industry resilience within advanced manufacturing.

Aspire to Astronomy

Curtin University
The University of Western Australia
International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research
SPICE Secondary Teachers Enrichment Program
Scitech

Intra-university
Inter-university
Inter-sectoral
Social/community

Connecting with regional communities.

Description

Aspire UWA works with partner schools in Western Australia to inspire and educate students about the benefits of higher education. The *Aspire to Astronomy* roadshow was a collaboration of education and teacher enrichment partners who are passionate about science and astronomy, and keen to share this enthusiasm with regional communities.

Partners

- The University of Western Australia (UWA)
 - Aspire UWA
 - School of Indigenous Studies (SIS)
 - SPICE, a secondary science teachers' enrichment program
- The International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR), a joint venture between Curtin University and The University of Western Australia
- 16 Aspire UWA partner schools
- Scitech Discovery Centre.

The overarching objective of Aspire to Astronomy was to engage regional students, their families, and communities in discussions about the importance of higher education.

Objectives

The objective of *Aspire to Astronomy* was to engage regional students, their families, and communities in discussions about the importance of higher education, by highlighting the exciting opportunities available by studying science and astronomy. Attitudes of family and community have a significant impact on students' aspirations for university and the roadshows help influence these attitudes.

Aspire to Astronomy partners shared additional aims to:

- engage the community with the richness of university life
- inform them of the opportunities and support available to regional students at university
- provide a unique professional development opportunity for teachers
- create an opportunity for scientific experts to reach a large number of students
- promote the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project.

Activities

Aspire to Astronomy extended Aspire UWA's core program delivered during visits to regional schools by bringing together complementary services to offer a rich multi-layered experience in schools and communities that seldom have access to such opportunities. Each partner brought unique skills to the mix, resulting in a range of activities that far exceeded the scope of Aspire's usual in-class activities.

Younger students built scale models of the solar system, launched water rockets and observed the sun using special solar telescopes. Older students built a radio telescope and measured the temperature of the sun's corona. UWA's Travelling Scientist, a PhD candidate studying astronomy, spoke to students about what it's like to become a scientist, while presentations about the SKA highlighted opportunities that will be available in regional WA – and had a lot of students deciding on the spot to study astronomy!

Science teachers received the latest curriculum-based professional development and resources through SPICE, including training in and access to a remote internet telescope at UWA that can be used by high schools. Schools with telescopes received training, while other schools were presented with new telescopes thanks to support from local industry.

Community 'Observing on the Oval' events were hosted by schools with local residents invited along for a sausage sizzle, presentations about radio astronomy and a guided tour of the night sky. Younger children created astro-art and launched water rockets, and community members were encouraged to bring along telescopes and binoculars. In some communities, local Elders shared Dreaming stories about the stars, providing guests with a deeper understanding and respect for local knowledge.

Outcomes

Three tours, 16 schools and 14 community events later, 2,200 students and 1,800 community members have participated in *Aspire to Astronomy* roadshows throughout regional Australia. The *Aspire to Astronomy* tours were extremely successful, with all stated objectives met and in cases exceeded. They delivered an inspirational experience that fostered positive attitudes towards science and education in regional communities. The positive relationships that developed as a result of the tours have led to all initiating further regional projects.

Partnership 'Working'

The partnership worked as all partners had complementary aims, activities and strengths to contribute. Many of the partners had collaborated on projects previously, so a level of trust and collegiality predated the *Aspire to Astronomy* project. Clear division of responsibilities were established, drawing on the strengths of each partner:

- school visits coordinated by partner schools and Aspire UWA
- ICRAR and Scitech provided astronomy and science-focused activities
- Aspire UWA introduced the concept of university to younger students and discussed pathways with secondary students
- SIS liaised closely with 'Follow the Dream' sites (an academic enrichment program supporting Indigenous students) and met with Indigenous students to inform them about the opportunities, university pathways and support available to them through SIS
- SPICE offered a unique professional development opportunity for regional science educators.

'Observing on the Oval' events were hosted by the partner schools, who took responsibility for promoting the events, and sourcing local support; ICRAR provided telescopes and

guided the sky tours; Aspire UWA, Scitech and SPICE ran astronomy-themed activities; and SIS liaised with local Elders.

Although organisations had individual responsibilities, all staff involved supported other partners wherever possible. This cooperation strengthened the relationships between partners, and allowed the tours to be run with minimal staff from each organisation. During tours, debriefings were held daily, ensuring strong communication between partners. After each tour, a final meeting celebrated the achievements and identified areas of improvement for future tours.

The success of *Aspire to Astronomy* reflects the strength of the relationships between all partners.

Future Activities

The *Aspire to Astronomy* partnership has inspired further collaborations, both with current partners and new collaborators, including an astrophotography based program in Derby Senior High School in WA's remote north-west in 2014; and a formal MOU between Scitech and Aspire UWA, where both organisations committed to collaborate in regional Western Australia each year.

The collaboration has also raised interest in pursuing further research on understanding barriers for regional students. Partners are keen to explore in more depth what the triggers are in remote communities to spark interest in higher education and what the impact of remoteness has on choices made. Capitalising on opportunities that will arise through location of the SKA in regional WA is also worthy of further exploration.

“Some staff members and parents have described the ‘Morawa Meets the Stars’ evening as one of the most delightful evenings they have spent in Morawa, not just this year, but ever! As a family evening it was exceptional – surprising, entertaining, informative, exciting and inexpensive!” – deputy principal.

AIME and the University of Wollongong

AIME

University of Wollongong

Social/community

The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience.

Description

The collaborative research partnership between the University of Wollongong and the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME), an Indigenous community organisation, has grown from internal university funding to national funding. This mutually beneficial partnership has resulted in: outputs to AIME for use in their program; funded educational opportunities for Indigenous students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels; and the design of statistical tools for the collection of quantitative data on the program.

The AIME program addresses educational inequity through a mentoring program designed to improve high school completion rates of Indigenous students.

Partners

- University of Wollongong (UOW)
- Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME), Redfern, NSW
- Dr Gawaian Bodkin Andrews, Macquarie University.

Objectives

While young Indigenous people are reported as increasingly interested in attending university, access and retention rates fall far below the levels required for equitable representation. The AIME program addresses this educational inequity through a mentoring program designed to improve high school completion rates of Indigenous students. While statistics show that AIME has achieved successes in this field, there has been little on-going empirical data gathered on this model. The partnership between UOW and AIME was designed to analyse and evaluate progress against key performance indicators and report on the viability of an expansion. The UOW–AIME research partnership has received half a million dollars in evaluation and research funding, including the award of an Australian Research Council Discovery Project (2014–16).

Activities

This partnership has spanned four years and its longitudinal nature has forged a productive relationship between the organisations. Previously, UOW had completed an evaluation of the AIME Outreach approach to mentoring, with the work enabling identification of the impacts of the Outreach program (whole day, across-the-year sessions) as compared to the Core program (shorter weekly sessions). The research indicated the potentially greater reach of the Outreach program, which enables more Indigenous high school students to access AIME mentoring. Currently, partner research with AIME is focused on three key areas:

- how AIME engages mentees and how this connects with educational futures
- how mentoring works in the AIME program
- investigating the impact on mentors.

The research partnership is always characterised by flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of AIME. To this end, UOW has employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The partnership team has strived to provide mutual benefit for all stakeholders, and has engaged in capacity building in the form of creating new survey instruments, development of mentor digital stories, and provided advice and support to other AIME research activities outside the remit of this specific project.

Outcomes

Ongoing outcomes have included the dissemination of key data and evidence that has largely supported the ongoing benefits of the AIME model. The next stage of research will seek to qualify the ways in which AIME successfully engages with Indigenous young people and how this approach can be harnessed and reproduced on a national basis. Multiple site visits have been conducted across Australia in order to build relationships and develop deeper understanding of how the program connects with young people. To date, AIME programs have been observed at fourteen locations, and at the completion of fieldwork the research team will have spoken with over 100 young Indigenous Australians.

The research team has also adapted approaches to data analysis, engaging in group analysis so that a range of perspectives and epistemologies can be applied to the data collected.

The reflective nature of this partnership has enabled strong bonds to be developed between the organisations and this has led to joint publications and the development of an UOW–AIME PhD scholarship.

Partnership ‘Working’

Research activities are aligned with protocols for research with Indigenous Australians, as described by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. As such, the partners work together to collaboratively discuss, plan and develop activities. There is ongoing feedback between the partners, incorporating changes in line with discussions. Maintaining a respectful relationship between UOW and AIME, inclusive of staff both at the central administrative level and ‘on the ground’, is the cornerstone of our practice.

The partnership is characterised by trust and reciprocity, characteristics that can only emerge through authentic engagement with a community organisation. Each research team member has evidenced their individual commitment to the AIME program and its goals through various means, including participation in AIME fundraising events, committee membership, and provision of advice and input on other activities. Output from the partnership is not owned by any of the parties and as such has been drawn upon in additional different and significant ways to that initially envisaged.

Importantly, the research team works closely with AIME staff ‘on the ground’ to develop relationships and build effective communication. The respectful and ongoing nature of relationship building has enabled the collection of deep and descriptive data; this we feel is the key element to the success of this partnership.

“The research partnership works so well... The expertise they have passed on to us has helped not only the external research they are involved with, but also our internal research processes.” – research director, AIME.

Future Activities

Current partnership activities are funded until 2017. As AIME grows and evolves, we envisage this relationship will continue. To understand the impact of this organisation on the lives of young Indigenous people, careful and ongoing analysis is required. An assessment of this kind can only come with time, so the team is already planning future research

partnerships. We regard this partnership as a key means to foreground the work and successes of AIME, and bring these to public, political and scholarly attention. Our approach will continue to be two-fold, involving the provision of rigorous data (quantitative and qualitative) and scholarly publications. Through the provision of both empirically-based research and scholarly literature, we hope that the particular approach that AIME has adopted is both replicated in other equity environments and recognised nationally as a best practice model.

Supported Pathways Programs

University of Wollongong

Intra-university
Inter-university
Social/community

At all levels of the pathway, students are provided with industry experience and are able to exit and access employment outcomes.

Description

The University of Wollongong's *Supported Pathways Program* is designed to improve the participation of LSES and Indigenous people in higher education. The program involves collaboration with local government agencies, TAFE NSW and local private-registered training organisations to raise the educational capacity of the Illawarra South East Region.

The partners identify skills shortages in the region and provide tangible pathways and vocational qualifications to further education and employment. The program is designed to provide individuals from under-represented backgrounds with education and employment outcomes, and with the transition and academic skills to be successful in higher education.

The aim of this collaboration is to increase the aspirations, awareness and attainment of individuals from LSES and Indigenous backgrounds.

Partners

- University of Wollongong (UOW)
- Department of State Training
- Department of Education and Workplace Relations
- Regional Development Australia
- UOW College
- Eurobodalla Adult Education
- Illawarra Retirement Trust
- Southern Pathology
- TAFE NSW.

Objectives

In 2013, the Illawarra South East Region's unemployment rate was three times the national average, making it the highest in Australia. This collaboration aims to increase the aspirations, awareness and attainment of individuals from LSES and Indigenous backgrounds and offer them tangible opportunities and pathways to gain employment and further their education.

The partners work together to design programs and pathways that meet the needs of each organisation, aligned with regional priorities around employment, and develop the skills and knowledge of individuals they work with to make a successful transition between each phase of the pathway.

The University of Wollongong's HEPPP allocation for 2013 and 2014 was used to establish networks between the partner organisations, offer financial support to students, and develop support and transition programs to ensure student access and success.

Activities

Activities and programs are guided by formalised agreements between each of the partners, which outline the approach, funding contributions, scope, roles and responsibilities of each partner to contribute to an overall framework. There are a series of activities common to all partners that include:

- **Clearly articulated pathways to further education and employment:** Students who participate in a *Supported Pathways Program* have the opportunity to complete Certificate III, Certificate IV and Diploma level courses which have specific jobs outcomes with the training provider and guaranteed university entry into specified courses. At all levels of the pathway, students are provided with industry experience and are able to exit and access employment outcomes, or continue through the pathway and progress on to university. These pathways are clearly communicated to potential students.
- **Financial support for students during phases of transition:** During the *Supported Pathways Program*, students can access financial support to assist them in furthering their education or making the transition to employment. Students can apply for support to cover the cost of their course or apply for a stipend to be provided on completion of their course.
- **Embedded transition programs to build capacity for further education:** Throughout the vocational qualifications, UOW staff have embedded an academic skills and university transition program to encourage students to aspire to higher education and provide them with the skills and knowledge to be successful. An individual career pathway plan is also developed with each student.

Outcomes

In 2013, Eurobodalla Adult Education, the UOW, Department of Education and Workplace Relations, and the Department of State Training partnered to offer the first *Supported Pathways Program*, 'Pathways to Careers in Health'. Ten students successfully completed the program, gaining a Certificate IV in Aged Care. All students had offers of employment, with five subsequently moving into employment and five enrolling in a university degree.

In 2014, the program was expanded to 158 students across five registered training organisations.

Qualitative comments from students indicate that the program has provided them with the awareness to pursue a university education and the skills and knowledge to translate that awareness into success in higher education.

"Thank you so much for the feedback – it was more positive than I anticipated. This academic writing is absolutely foreign to me, but I am determined to work really hard at it for the sake of this midwifery dream." – student, 2014.

Partnership 'Working'

Over the last two years, the partnerships evolved organically, but were developed based on a mutual goal to support individuals from under-represented backgrounds to gain employment or access higher education and raise the capacity of the local region.

Over the last year, the partnerships have evolved into a strategic collaboration which has been underpinned by high level strategic agreements between each organisation, with management committees to oversee the successful delivery of the programs.

The agreements set out a shared philosophy and approach, while recognising the strengths of each organisation and the role they each play in delivering the program. The agreements include a shared funding model for the program as well as a common marketing strategy,

collaboratively developed transition programs, and a commitment to continuous improvement, planning and feedback mechanisms between each stakeholder.

The partnership also involves collaborating within the university to gain the commitment of faculty to support the program. The partnership works because:

- The program meets the complex operational needs of each organisation, as well as sharing a mutually common goal of supporting students from under-represented backgrounds into employment or higher education.
- It builds on the strengths of each organisation working together to achieve a common goal.
- High levels of trust have been developed between the partners and regular opportunities for input and review have allowed for the model to be collaboratively developed.
- Clear and concise communication between stakeholders is documented through collaborative project planning.
- The program is flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of diverse organisational structures.

Future Activities

The partners involved in the *Supported Pathways Program* have recognised the value of this collaboration and are keen to continue fostering these relationships into the future. The existing partners are currently negotiating a three-year strategic plan for *Pathways to Employment and Higher Education*, based on the model that has been piloted and implemented over the last two years. Other new partnerships are also being explored with the hope of expanding the *Supported Pathways Program* to 500 students in 2015.

Acronyms

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACU	Australian Catholic University
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AEO	Aboriginal Education Officer
AHEAD	Addressing Higher Educational Access Disadvantage
AIME	Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
ANU	The Australian National University
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
BAAA	Building Academic Aspirations and Achievement
BPA	Big Picture Academies
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CQID	Central Queensland Indigenous Development Ltd.
CQIT	Central Queensland Institute of TAFE
CQU	Central Queensland University
CSU	Charles Sturt University
CU	Children's University
CUBC	Curtin University Boat Club
DASA	Diversity and Structural Adjustment
DEAP	Deakin Engagement and Access Program
DEC	(New South Wales) Department of Education and Communities
DECD	(South Australian) Department for Education and Child Development
DEECD	(Victorian) Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DETE	(Queensland) Department of Education Training and Employment
DoE	(Tasmanian) Department of Education
ECU	Edith Cowan University
ELFS	English Language and Foundation Studies
FAC	Family Action Centre
FedUni	Federation University
FPSMA	Film Production and Stop Motion Animation
GPA	Grade Point Average
Griffith	Griffith University
HEF	(Queensland) Higher Education Forum

HEPP	Higher Education Participation Program
HEPPP	Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program
ICP	Innovative Curriculum and Pedagogy
ICRAR	The International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPROWD	Indigenous Police Recruitment Our Way Delivery
JCU	James Cook University
JLA	Junior Learning Academy
LEAP	Learning, Education, Aspiration and Participation
LEAP	Learn, Experience, Access Professions
LSES	Low Socio-Economic Status
MAP4U	Murdoch University's Aspirations and Pathways for University
MET	Mobile Education Trailer
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee
NCSEHE	National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education
NISEP	National Indigenous Science Education Program
PAFC	Port Adelaide Football Club
PEP	Participation Equity and Partnerships
PWS	Parks and Wildlife Services
QTAC	Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
RPP	Regional Partnerships Program
RSOP	Regional Schools Outreach Program
SAASTA	South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SCU	Southern Cross University
SEAMS	Strengthening Engagement and Achievement in Mathematics and Science
SEAS	Special Entry Access Scheme
SIS	School of Indigenous Studies
SKA	Square Kilometre Array
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SPIRIT	SPICE, Physics, ICRAR, Remote Internet Telescope

STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TAI	The Aspiration Initiative
TNLA	Tropical North Learning Academy
UC	University of Canberra
UEP	University Enabling Program
UNE	University of New England
UniSA	University of South Australia
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UON	University of Newcastle
UOW	University of Wollongong
UQ	University of Queensland
USC	University of the Sunshine Coast
USQ	University of Southern Queensland
UTAS	University of Tasmania
UWA	The University of Western Australia
VELS	Victorian Essential Learning Standards
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VMPA	Victorian Multilateral Partnership Agreement
VTAC	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
WACE	Western Australian Certificate of Education
WCE	Whole-of-Community Engagement

About the Centre

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) began operation in 2008, hosted by the University of South Australia. In May 2013, Curtin University won the bid to take over the centre until December 2015, and received funding to achieve its aim of informing public policy design and implementation and institutional practice, to improve higher education participation and success for marginalised and disadvantaged people.

The NCSEHE's objectives are:

- to be at the centre of public policy dialogue about equity in higher education
- to assist in 'closing the loop' between equity policy, research and practice by:
 - supporting and informing evaluation of current equity practice, with a particular focus on identifying good practice
 - identifying innovative approaches to equity through existing research and the development of a forward research program to fill gaps in knowledge
 - translating these learnings into practical advice for decision-makers and practitioners alike.

Student Equity and Participation

The NCSEHE's key purpose is "to inform public policy design and implementation, and institutional practice, to improve higher education participation and success for marginalised and disadvantaged people."

In keeping with its purpose, the NCSEHE is connecting Commonwealth student equity policy with the activities of higher education institutions and national equity outcomes through its input into comparative assessment of institutional strategies, systemic assessments of policy achievements and assessments of national policy-making in view of this evidence. The Centre's focus is based on three programs of research activity:

1. Equity Policy and Program Evaluation
The Centre is providing leadership and support in developing a national approach and resources to evaluate the impact of initiatives to increase participation of people from low SES backgrounds and other equity groups in higher education.
2. Equity Policy and Planning Research
The Centre is furthering equity policy and planning in Australia, sharing knowledge and capabilities developed in Australia, and providing evidence on the impact of policy on equity outcomes in the system. By enabling national research and engagement on higher education policy and practice, the Centre ensures its research includes analysis of all student equity groups including people from low SES, Indigenous, regional and remote communities, and people with disability.
3. Student Equity Data
The Centre conducts analysis of higher education datasets from a student equity perspective. This encompasses:
 - compiling and analysing national equity data and survey data on student transition to higher education
 - managing a website that presents data on student equity performance in higher education; in particular, the mapping of higher education participation data in Australia
 - providing access to data and data-driven research on equity policy and programs from around Australia and the world.

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